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FOR MISSION LEADERS

MISSION-FOCUS

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WHERE ARE WE IN MISSION TODAY: WHICH PARADIGM?

Wilbert R. Shenk

Christian missions today are still in the throes of transition from one era to another. This crisis of missions cannot be separated from the larger crisis of Western civilization. From the time of the Enlightenment the West was fired by a spirit of manifest destiny which was expressed in technological achievement, geographical exploration and territorial conquest. The morality of manifest destiny taught that the West was trustee of the rest of the world. Whether "Britannia ruled the waves" or Uncle Sam's B-52s controlled the air, political and economic power centered in the West. And with power went the prerogatives of guardianship.

Western domination eventually came under attack. Democracy and empire proved to be incompatible allies in the end. Western morality turned out to be a self-condemned pretentiousness.

Christian missions have been conditioned by these same forces and ferment. The missionary enterprise, from one angle, is an extension of a burned-out Western civilization. Bonhoeffer sensed the depth of the problem forty years ago when he wrote that "The church is church only when it exists for others." The German church's cultural captivity during the Nazi reign has dramatized the problem. To be self-giving is not to prostitute one's integrity or destroy one's real vocation. Servanthood and prophecy demand a strength of character which is incompatible with compromise and compliance.

What we are confronted with today is no simple loss of missionary nerve. Statistics show the total Protestant missionary force remaining fairly constant. What has occurred is a decline in the number of missionaries sponsored by agencies related to the conciliar movement and an increase in missionaries from other quarters. Missionary initiative has, consequently, passed from the hands of Protestants most worried by the ambiguities and moral failures of Western civilization to the conservative-evangelicals—the element which is still the most enthusiastic and uncritical purveyor of western culture to the rest of the world (Cf., *inter alia,* Rogers, *Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical,* Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals,* and Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People.*)

In missionary circles attention has been focused recently on the need for new models of mission. This search is notable chiefly for its preoccupation with pragmatic and structural insights rather than a fundamentally fresh theological vision. Yet mission is nothing if not theological. To seek solutions at the pragmatic level alone is to condemn the missionary movement to continued cultural enslavement.

The Bible presents us with two paradigms for mission. These two models have much in common but there are decisive differences. I shall suggest that the modern missionary movement has found greatest affinity with the first paradigm but the second should be normative for the Christian church.

Mission in the Old Testament

Most sixteenth-century Protestant reformers believed the church no longer had any active missionary responsibility. Eventually Protestants joined Roman

Catholics and the Radical Reformation in affirming that the church did have a missionary mandate. It is only in this century, however, that scholars have helped all of us to see that the people of God have always been called to be a missionary community. The roots of Christian mission are in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament portrays Israel as a people on the way to salvation. In moments of worship and through the voices of the great prophets a vision broke through that the **shalom** given to Israel was also for the whole world. "May God be gracious to us and bless us, and make his face to shine upon us," sang the people of Israel, "that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving power among all nations" (Psa. 67:1f). Isaiah anticipated a time when the nations would flow to the house of the Lord (2:2f) and once the messianic age began ". . . the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (11:9). Isaiah gives the clearest statement of Israel's missionary call to be "a covenant to the people, a light to the nations" (42:6).

The missionary vision was thoroughly theocentric. Israel was conscious that it was by God's grace she had been called. Yahweh was a righteous God who had special concern for the poor, the weak and the foreigner. He was Lord of creation and of history and intolerant of idolatry. **The goal of mission was the creation of a people who lived all of life according to the will of God.**

Israel's identity was based on election. The call of Abraham was primordial (Gen. 12:1-3). The chosen people began with the choosing of one man. Yet election was not to be interpreted as favoritism. Israel's apostasy was to make Yahweh a tribal deity. Israel was not the object but the subject of election. Through Israel's election the peoples of the world were to be blessed (Gen. 12:3). Election was election for service. It was not based on race, tribe or nation. (As if to discourage Israel from thinking along these lines, God assured her she was "the least" among the nations.) The Old Testament emphasizes, not Israel as a people but Israel as **the people of God.** There is no concern for racial purity or cultural uniqueness. Provision was made for new ahderents to be incorporated.

The message to Israel was the message to the nations. The Old Testament does not state that the election of Israel meant the rejection of other nations. Rather, other nations were viewed in relation to Israel as the people of God. Surrounding peoples were frequently a political threat or religious temptation to Israel. God did not hesitate to use other nations to judge and punish Israel's infidelity. On occasion He provided for Israel's welfare through the intervention of another nation. When Israel was faithful, that faithfulness became a testimony to the nations concerning Yahweh. The challenge to Israel was to set an example of social righteousness and authentic worship which would call other nations to recognize Yahweh as their God also. Increasingly the prophets expected that the messiah would bring about the gathering in of the nations.

This messianic message was the basis of Israel's hope. Through the prophets Israel received a vision of the coming messiah as the bearer of salvation. The messiah was expected to be a universal figure as well as Servant of the Lord. The messiah would be uniquely qualified by his (1) absolute surrender to the service of Yahweh, (2) special authoritative relationship to Yahweh, (3) mandate to establish Yahweh's rule and demonstrate his sovereignty. The prophets expected that the messiah would not go out to the nations but the nations would be brought to him as tribute. The nations were a fitting gift to the Servant of the Lord.

Mission moved centripetally. The people of God were called to serve; the word of God which came to Israel was addressed to all peoples; the messianic servant was looked for as the bearer of God's shalom; and it was expected that all the nations would ultimately recognize the authority of the messiah and acknowledge Yahweh as sovereign. But the thrust of mission in the Old Testament was centripetal. Israel was to be a "light to the nations," and the peoples of the world would finally journey up to Jerusalem to join in the great messianic banquet. The geographic center was important.

In this atmosphere Israel did not launch an evangelizing mission. Israel's vision of a faith for the nations—glimpsed in worship and through the prophets—was not translated into action. During the inter-testamental period, however, Israel's self-understanding underwent change. Israel in dispersion began to engage in missionary activity, and Judaism became a missionary faith. Jewish missionary action reached its greatest intensity at the time of Jesus. Both Jesus and Paul sharply criticized it (Matt. 23:15, Rom. 2:17-23).

Mission in the New Testament

There are important points of continuity between the Old and New Testament interpretations of mission. But mission is also altered in crucial ways.

Jesus began His ministry by announcing that the kingdom of God had come. The gospel was that God was now acting to fulfill what had been promised through the prophets. Jesus proceeded by bringing the messianic character of the kingdom into sharper focus. He not only proclaimed the kingdom; He was the kingdom. Social righteousness and personal wholeness were placed at the heart of His ministry (Matt. 4:17, 23; Luke 4:18-19).

Although Jesus did not personally direct his ministry to

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non-Jews, He laid the basis for His universal messiahship. The prophets expected the messiah would bring the peoples together in a new relationship. Jesus created that new community by founding it on a radically different basis—suffering love and self-sacrifice. Every other society is based on self-preservation, and order is maintained by coercion. Jesus rejected conventional power and means as the foundation for His kingdom.

The inauguration of the messianic age marked the beginning of a new period in history rather than the end of history. The messianic age introduced on the plane of human experience a new order and a fresh historical possibility. Although Jesus sent out messengers to tell about the kingdom during His lifetime, the apostles became "missionaries" only after Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2). Their function was three-fold. (1) The apostles were **proxies** for the messiah. In His name they proclaimed and demonstrated the end-time salvation. (2) They were also **first fruits** and representatives of the messianic community. And (3) the apostles were **witnesses** to Jesus' resurrection while carrying on His work in the world. The Holy Spirit empowered them for this task.

The church is the messianic community (Eph. 2:20, Gal. 3:28, John 8:56). The apostles do not witness as individuals in isolation. They speak out of a living context where the kingdom is being experienced.

In contrast to the Old Testament, Jesus deliberately directed the mission to the peoples: the centripetal pattern gave way to the centrifugal. This restructuring, mentioned in the various forms of the Great Commission, called the people of God to be a dispersed people. The Gospels end with the resurrection and the call to mission. This reformulation desacralized the land and holy places. God's people were freed to move across the face of the earth announcing the good news of the messiah and forming new centers of messianic reality. (Cf. W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land.*) Territoriality is superseded by universality.

To summarize: Mission in the New Testament was based on the message that the kingdom of God was being fulfilled as promised. This message was for all peoples. The establishment of the kingdom marked the beginning of a new epoch—the messianic age when the Holy Spirit carries out the will of Jesus Christ. The church as the messianic community had a key role to play both as a living expression of messianic reality and a witness to it. Jesus restructured mission from a centripetal to a centrifugal pattern, from a passive existence to an active reaching out, from being only a sign and presence to sharing the good news through self-sacrifice and suffering love. God's people are to face outward and send out members in missionary obedience.

Meaning for Contemporary Mission

The modern missionary movement has had a strongly geographic orientation. The Constantinian character of the Western church assured a close alliance between missions and state. It was natural for the missionary to seek to bring into existence a church patterned after the sending church. Terms like "national" or "indigenous" church indicate an uncritical acceptance of Constantinian forms of church life. (There is no discernible contribution from the "Free Church" tradition to missiological thinking in this respect.) Comity arrangements among missionary societies were a logical extension ecclesiastically of what had been done politically.

Missionaries not only reflected the Constantinian background and pattern of the Western church but also did their pioneering during a period of geographical exploration and political expansion from the West. William Carey and other budding missionaries were greatly influenced by Captain Cook's *Journals* and similar accounts.

The Bible does not refer to a national congregation but a congregation from among the nations or peoples. Indeed, we moderns have imposed on the Bible a concept of nation alien to the biblical period. This territorialism has inhibited a vision of the new messianic community which might overcome the natural divisions among the peoples of the world.

The emphasis on territory led to a corollary: Western missions proceeded to universalize a particular (Western) cultural expression of the faith rather than expecting the messianic reign to transform cultural and political particularities. To be sure, missions eventually recognized the problem intellectually. Practically, little progress has been made in overcoming the consequences for theology, worship patterns, architectural styles of church buildings, ministerial support, etc.

This problem is a direct parallel to the situation facing the primitive church. The great debate between the Apostle Paul and the Judaizers turned on this issue. In that case Paul's viewpoint prevailed. In the long run the Judaizers have dominated church history.

Not only have Western forms and thought dominated the development of the younger churches, but Western distortions of the gospel have been transmitted as well. One of the clearest illustrations of this is the failure to provide younger churches with an adequate theology of the church. It has been observed, for example, that the Chinese were not given a theology of the church and its missionary obligation. "The first full-orbed doctrine which the Chinese received is Marxism. We did not give them a doctrine of the church in the purpose of God" (Goodall, *Missions Under the Cross,* 139). The list could be extended.

The modern missionary movement has become a judgment on war even though this is not generally recognized. One major result of missions has been to extend the Christian church into nearly all corners of the world. It is one thing for so-called Christian lands to conduct war against the infidels. It is quite another matter for Christians in an ecumenical age to acquiesce quietly and support their governments in waging war when there

are invariably Christian brothers and sisters on "the other side." (This fact has been dramatized in the recent war in Vietnam when a Mennonite service worker noticed a cross on a Northern soldier's canteen. When the Vietnamese acknowledged he was indeed a Christian, the two men embraced, momentarily recognizing they were bound together by a transcendent bond, and the Vietnamese assured the American that there were other Christians fighting on the side of the North.) The context for Christian ethical decision-making has been radically altered during the past 200 years even if most Christian ethicists have yet to recognize it. Kingdom ethics inevitably require that we reconsider the methods which Jesus pioneered for establishing and maintaining the messianic kingdom.

Modern missions have been marked by pragmatism. It is frequently observed that the missionary movement has been motivated more by how than why. Theology of mission, as a division of theology generally, did not emerge until late in the nineteenth century. Missionary writings were dominated until this century by questions of method and principle. During the past several decades the contribution of the social sciences to missiology has probably been more influential than that of theology. Some of the most vigorous applications of social scientific methods to the study of missions has been made by conservative evangelicals. This leads to an uncritical pragmatism.

Conclusion

The Bible describes two paradigms for mission. Israel was elected to be the people of God in order that she might serve God. Religious, cultural and political particularities all distorted Israel's missionary obedience. Jesus introduced a new missionary vision of religious, cultural, and political transformation which led to the creation of a new people who were free to live by the will of God. The modern missionary movement has followed the first paradigm far more than the second. But it is the second which contains the true seeds of the kingdom of God.

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THE GOSPEL AND CULTURE IN EVANGELISM

Robert L. Ramseyer

Culture and the Gospel—Definitions

Christians can be engaged effectively in evangelism, in the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ, only when the gospel and culture are in proper relationship to each other both in the life of the individual Christian and in the corporate life of the fellowship of believers that we call the church. This gospel-culture relationship is seen most clearly in Jesus Christ. When this relationship is not maintained properly the church and individual Christians either become so isolated socially that they are unable to communicate the good news to those outside the church, or they become so much like the society around them that they have no good news to communicate.

Culture as it is used here means all of the things that we acquire by learning, including our language, all of the things which are handed down in our society from generation to generation. Culture has been defined as "the common, learned way of life shared by the members of a society, consisting of the totality of tools, techniques, social institutions, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, and systems of value known to the group." In other words, culture is that which binds us together as human beings into groups and communities. However, as we are bound together into groups, we are also divided from other human beings who are in different groups with different cultural traditions. Culture is not only the great unifier of human beings, it is also the great separator. Culture brings us together and it pulls us apart. As we are drawn closer to some people, we are pulled farther away from others.

Gospel as it is used here refers to the good news of the richness and fullness of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ: an act of God in Jesus Christ that occurred in our own world in the midst of the flow of human history. The gospel is something that was done within human culture, in a specific cultural setting at a specific time and place in human history. As Christians we try to understand what the gospel means, what God has done for us. In our attempts to understand, however, we are forced to use our own cultural equipment, languages and world-views which we learned as we were growing up. This is the only way that we have of understanding anything. Moreover, as we try to share the gospel with others, we are again forced to use the means which our own culture has brought to us or which we have learned from other cultural traditions. These are the only means which we possess for expressing and sharing that which we have experienced.

Because of these limitations both our comprehension and our expression of the infinite richness of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ can be only partial and

incomplete. As the Apostle Paul has said, "For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; . . . What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete, as complete as God's knowledge of me" (I Cor. 13:9-12). There will always be tension between God's perfect gospel and our own weak attempts to comprehend it and to share it with others.

Gospel and Culture Together—Jesus Christ

Only in Jesus Christ do we see the coming together of human culture and the living word of God. We call this the incarnation. In Jesus Christ God became one with us and one of us; He became "like his brothers in every way" (Heb. 2:17) so that He could share with us. As Jesus Christ God identified with us completely, accepting the many limits that human culture imposed on His self-expression. Jesus spoke one human language, accepting the limts of that language. He did not invent a new "Christian" language which might have more adequately expressed the gospel. He used what human culture provided, limited as that was. As far as the people who lived around Him when He was growing up knew, Jesus was fully one of them. He was so much one of them that later on when He did begin to speak and teach with authority His neighbors were very surprised and wondered what had happened to this Jesus whom they had known so well.

Jesus chose to live as an ordinary human being so that people around Him felt at home. People were not afraid to bring Him their problems and concerns. They loved to hear His teaching which seemed to bring together God and their world as they knew it. In the wilderness we are told that Satan deliberately tried to persuade Jesus to abandon this course and to become a spectacular miracle worker. Jesus said no. This was not the way to share the love of God with men and women who must live in ordinary human society.

But as He identified with human beings in their society and culture, Jesus never allowed that society and culture to become the ultimate directors of His life. Jesus showed clearly that neither He nor His followers were bound by any human society and culture. The New Testament says clearly that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world, temporary sojourners whose citizenship is not here but in the kingdom of God. Jesus' authority did not come from any human society.

Guided as He was by a different authority, Jesus finally ran afoul of human authority. He refused to give the allegiance that His society demanded. He refused to follow all of the traditions which were part of His culture. For this, Jesus was hung on the cross.

Our Response to the Gospel—Faith/Discipleship

If the gospel is the good news about what God has done for us, then something more than a merely intellectual acknowledgment is called for on our part. The gospel is not some new esoteric knowledge to enlighten us; it is God's love saving us from sin. Our basic problem as human beings is not that we are ignorant but that we are sinners. To help us in this situation, God acted in love in Jesus Christ. We are called to respond to God's action with an appropriate action of our own, an action which we call faith. Faith here is not an intellectual assent to the proposition that Jesus died for us, but joining what God is doing. We join the movement, becoming part of what He is doing. In more traditional language the appropriate human response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ is to become His disciple and join His group of followers.

If it is true that we are called upon to be active disciples rather than passive assenters, then a basic part of our response will be the sharing of the gospel with others. Jesus sent His disciples out to share the faith, to minister to people as He found them. Jesus told them that just as His father had sent Him into the world, He was sending them into the world (John 20:21). We have His direct command in Matthew and in Acts to be witnesses, to make disciples at home and abroad, all over the face of the earth.

The content of the gospel also demands that it be shared. The gospel is the good news about God's love, a love which reaches to all people. The gospel is good news about something that actually happened. It is not a pleasant story which someone invented just to make people happy. The response which people make to the gospel is of life and death significance. There is no way that a Christian can share in this gospel for himself and ignore the people around him who do not know Jesus Christ. The gospel in its very essence is a gospel which must be shared. There is no way that any Christian can be left out of the call to evangelize.

Gospel and Culture—Identification in Translation

In most discussions of culture and evangelism, the emphasis is on communication and identification. We have called this the incarnational emphasis. When I try to share the good news with persons, I want it to come alive within them and to become a part of their own lives rather than something foreign and outside their daily experience. I want it to be expressed in terms of their own culture as "Good News" rather than as some new law that is being placed on them from the outside. The gospel should come through to them as liberation in their own lives rather than as a new burden they are forced to carry. Consequently, in evangelism I try to express the gospel in categories which are familiar to the other person, using the things of everyday life in that person's environment to help that person see what God has done and is doing for us.

As the gospel is translated in this way into a new cultural setting, there is always the very real danger of so distorting the gospel that the result is no longer the Christian faith at all but some new syncretism that merely uses some Christian terminology. This has made some

people who engage in evangelism afraid to do any translation at all. To preserve the purity of the faith they insist on keeping it in all of the cultural forms to which they are accustomed. This would be as if God had insisted on coming to us in all His infinite glory instead of coming to us as the incarnate Son of God. Thus when the Jesuits first came to evangelize Japan they felt that the Japanese words for God were too full of non-Christian ideas about God and insisted that Japanese Christians all refer to God by the Latin term "deus." So in Japan the Christian God became one more god among the many, a God whose personal name was "deus."

If we are afraid of translation and identification we need to remember that the first major heresy in the New Testament was that of the Judaizers, who were afraid to take the gospel into the non-Judaic world. They were people who said, "If people are to understand the gospel, they must come to us, into our thought world. Then they can become Christians. But we cannot go into their thought world with the gospel because that is not a Christian thought world and it would corrupt the gospel."

Paul made it clear that this sort of thinking is wrong. The gospel can and must become incarnate in every cultural context in our world. When I want to share the gospel with my neighbors who are not Christians, I must try to become one with them, expressing the good news in ways that are clear and understandable to them. If Paul could live like a Jew to win Jews, like a Gentile to win Gentiles, and like the weak to win the weak (I Cor. 9:20-22), then surely we can identify ourselves with those around us in order to share the good news with them. Such identification is risky, of course, but it is the kind of risk that makes faith an exciting adventure.

Gospel and Culture—The Personal Relationship

In identification in evangelism however, it is not enough to try to be close to a group or a particular variety of people—Jews, Gentiles, village Hindus, etc. If I am to share the gospel with a person, I need to know that person. This is what Jesus did. He preached to the multitudes, but He also had time for individuals as they came to Him with their concerns and problems. He learned to know them. Then His gospel could be good news for them, answering the problems which they had. In our rapidly changing world many people feel lost and left out. They feel that no one is concerned about **them** as people, that they are merely being pushed around and manipulated as objects. If I as a Christian show that I really care about such a person, then that person may begin to see that Christ Himself cares, and the good news of Jesus Christ can become real for that person.

As we plan evangelism and evangelistic strategies, it is easy to forget this. It is easy to think about people as things and to work out strategies for maneuvering them into the kingdom of God. We stand apart from them, try to think about them objectively, and see how we can get them to believe in Jesus. But as we do this, we are treating them just as the modern world treats them. The only difference between us and merchants who are trying to get people to buy their product is that we have a better product.

But the gospel is not something to be merchandised. It is a personal message about God who became human like us in order to save us. It is a message which needs to be shared through a human relationship if it is to be received as the good news. We need to be open with people, admitting that we like them have strengths and weaknesses. And God who has come to us in Jesus Christ to help us in the midst of our weaknesses and problems will help them with whatever problems they may have. We and they are just exactly the kind of people whom Jesus came to help and for whom the gospel is good news.

In evangelism, then, there is no substitute for building personal relationships. But, surprisingly, it is easy for earnest Christian people to be impersonal in their evangelistic work. As we prepare for evangelism or talk together in conferences on evangelism, we readily prepare strategies to reach village people in India, or to reach high caste city people, or university students, or factory workers, or housewives. We may even work out more general approaches with spiritual laws or six principles of the Christian faith. All of these approaches may have validity at certain times when used in certain ways. But all of them tempt us to try to fit real flesh-and-blood people into categories which we have constructed. We manipulate people, attributing problems to them which we think they should feel, answering the questions which we think they should ask, instead of listening to the urgent poblems and questions which they have and then together with them trying to hear the answers which God has for them.

We are not saying here that there are many gospels—different gospels for different people. The gospel is one. But the gospel is good news about an infinite God whose love is beyond our comprehension. It is a gospel about God's love, which is the answer to any human situation. Since the gospel speaks to us where we are, answering the problems which we have, that aspect of the gospel which is most apparent to a person will depend on the problems he is facing at that time. If I feel the burden of guilt because of my sin weighing me down, then the gospel comes to me as the good news of God's forgiving love and of cleansing from sin. If I feel that I am living in a world surrounded by evil spirits, the gospel comes to me as the good news of Jesus Christ's victory over all of the spiritual forces of evil, a victory in which I share fully as a follower of Jesus. If I am lonely, the gospel tells me that God's Holy Spirit is always with me and that I am part of a great company of Jesus' people.

Although we can never fully comprehend all of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, as we grow in Christian faith, we see many facets of the gospel. In evangelism, I must be sensitive to the needs which my friends are feeling so that the gospel which I try to share with them can be God's answer to the problems with

which they are wrestling, so that they can see that God is speaking directly to each of them and to their needs in each specific situation.

I hope that it is now clear why evangelism demands personal involvement. If I am not personally involved, if the word of God is not incarnate in the immediate environment of my friend through me, then it becomes extremely difficult for my friend to see the gospel as good news in that situation. If our friends cannot see the gospel as good news in their own settings, why should we expect them to respond and give their lives to Jesus Christ? After all, in order to share His love with us, God felt that He needed to make His word incarnate in our world as one of us. In order to share His love with us, God became a human being in the person of Jesus Christ who lived and worked among us. Why should we feel that we can share His love with a less direct involvement? This is not to say that mass approaches to evangelism are without value. They can be useful as a general introduction to the gospel, but there is no substitute for the personal sharing of a Savior who came into our society as a person in order to save us as human beings.

Gospel and Culture—Social Bridges and Faith Barriers

As Christians we have experienced the fact that it is not always easy to develop deep personal relationships with the non-Christians around us. Between Christians, the people of God, and the non-Christian world there are both bridges and barriers, and if we are serious about evangelism we need to understand these clearly.

As Christians we are different. We have committed our lives to Jesus Christ. He is our Lord and we want to follow Him. Therefore the ultimate authority by which Christians order their lives is different than it is for other people. This allegiance to Jesus Christ unites us as Christians and divides us from other people. At the same time, Christians have come from the general society to Jesus Christ. Therefore we have in common with people in general society many of the things which bind them together. Ethnically and socially we are at one with our non-Christian neighbors.

Even though the people of God are united in Jesus Christ, they are socially as diverse as the social backgrounds out of which they have come. Thus the people of God have clear and firm social and cultural bridges to the non-Christian society in which they live. But there are also barriers of faith between Christians and the society in which they live which are caused by the change in the life of the Christian that faithfulness to Jesus Christ demands. The unfortunate fact is that while these bridges and barriers may be clear when a new Christian group is forming, a group quickly begins to build ethnic-like barriers and then to compensate for the resulting loss of social contact with the world by minimizing the differences which faith demands.

But what about the faith barriers, the separateness, that faithfulness to Jesus Christ demands? Does not Paul himself warn us against getting too close to unbelievers, quoting the Lord as saying "you must leave them, and separate yourselves from them" (II Cor. 6:17)? Christ has called us to be His disciples, a radical step which demands a totally new orientation to life, to everything which we do, to the way in which we live. As a Christian I want to do everything that I do consciously under the direction of Jesus Christ. This ought to mean that we will live differently from the non-Christian people around us. Now the pertinent question for me is, how can I as a native of India, or the United States, or Japan most completely express the gospel of Jesus Christ in my native society? How shall I change my way of life so that it will more fully express the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ? Often this emphasis may seem to be in conflict with the incarnation-identification which is so vital in evangelism. I may feel that if I make the radical changes in my life which faith would seem to demand, it will separate me from non-Christian neighbors with whom I want to share the gospel. It may make them angry with me and with all Christians so that they would not want to hear about Jesus Christ. Thus I am tempted for evangelistic reasons to minimize some of the things which faithfulness to Jesus Christ would seem to demand, some of the differences which being a Christian should make in my life. I minimize them so that I can have the respect and goodwill of my non-Christian neighbors and thus more easily share the gospel with them.

The Evangelistic Dilemma

This then is the evangelistic dilemma. How can I be as much like my neighbors as possible so that I can share the good news readily with them, and at the same time be as much like Jesus Christ as possible so that I really have the good news of victory in Jesus Christ to share?

Too often we are tempted to deal with evangelistic problems by developing new strategies rather than by dealing with the root of the problem—our manner of being as the people of God. The root problem in evangelism is not that we lack good techniques and strategies. The root problem is that all too often the church of Jesus Christ has ceased to be a group which is vitally concerned about living in faithfulness to God, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, maintaining living relationships with its non-Christian neighbors so that in its life among them it can bring them the living word of God. Instead of dealing with the root problem, we are tempted to study culture and society as if all that we needed for effective evangelism was new knowledge and new techniques to develop new and more effective evangelistic approaches. But new techniques cannot transform a church which has become an ethnic unit into a dynamic tool for sharing the gospel. When a church has become an isolated natural social unit, be that social unit tribal, factional, or communal, it can no longer transmit the good news effectively. A church which has ceased identifying with non-Christian people, a church which no longer lives the

gospel in close contact with non-Christian people, cannot do evangelism no matter how much it studies anthropology and sociology, church growth and evangelistic methodology. Studies and strategies can be helpful if the church is already present with a clear view of its separateness but also with its cultural-social bridges open. When the church is a vital fellowship into which anyone with faith in Jesus Christ can pass and feel immediately at home, then it can profit from deeper study of methods and strategies of evangelism.

I know of no real answer to the identification-separation dilemma in evangelism other than the person and work of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus is the perfect example of complete faithfulness to the will of God in His life and at the same time the perfect example of full identification with a specific human, social-cultural setting. Jesus is the love of God fully expressed in human culture and society. This expression ultimately led Jesus to the cross because of the threat which God's love posed to the established social order. People saw God's love clearly in Jesus Christ and many responded to it. However God's love is also judgment, and this was so clear that some felt that they needed to remove Jesus from their midst. It is important to remember that those who rejected Jesus did so because they understood Him and knew that they had to make a decision about Him. They did not reject Him because they considered His message foreign or irrelevant to their situation. They rejected Him because He came to them as the light of God in the world, and they could not endure that. They preferred to live in darkness.

In carnation and separation, faith barriers and social bridges, identification with human society in faithfulness to Jesus Christ—this is the context of the evangelistic task to which we are called. Only as we strive toward these goals as they are personified in Jesus Christ can we evangelize as the people of God.

Robert L. Ramseyer has been director of the Overseas Mission Training Center sponsored jointly by the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, the General Conference Mennonite Commission on Overseas Mission and the Mennonite Board of Missions. This article was first delivered as a message to the All-India Mennonite Evangelism Conference, Hyderabad, A.P., India, in January 1976.

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TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

David A. Shank

Introduction

Ex-opera singer N. "came to Christ" out of total suicidal despair; somehow she understood that there was hope for her in Christ. Teenage A., in conflict with his family,"came to Christ" in his search for personal identity and for an "absolute" to which he could commit himself. Middle-class "riser" L. "came to Christ" out of a deep need to replace a religious system that for him was neither adequate or consistent.

Each of these persons in a different context perceived what it meant to be "outside of Christ." What they had in common was their conversion to Christ as known in the common life of the same congregation. Each had turned from a previous condition to what was a consciously different life in a new community; yet the so-called Pauline experience of law and grace (Romans 7), or the Lutheran experience of condemnation and justification by faith was not an obvious functional part of their conversions. How do we understand conversion?

The "Pauline"-Lutheran paradigm of conversion has colored traditional Protestant understanding. The style and message of evangelism and mission have consciously sought to effect conversion as defined by a particular mental and spiritual context. This is not, however, the paradigm that we find in the gospels where there is a call to follow and become a disciple. Neither is it the paradigm of the Old Testament, nor that of the Book of the Acts. And yet in the Old Testament, Gospels and Acts, as well as the rest of the non-Pauline authors, conversion is considered absolutely essential to salvation. Thus A. D. Nock in his classic study of conversion in the first Christian centuries[1] points out that it is something found uniquely within the prophetic tradition of the Hebrew and Christian faiths. Other religions had adherents who "used" the religious thought, or system, or celebration, or priest without being wholly committed in faith to them; nor were they expected to be. Judaism and Christianity, however, "demanded a new life in a new people."

Judaism was oriented by the monotheistic, anti-idolatrous, and strongly ethical orientation which contrasted with contemporary religious climate. Hebrew youth knew when they were integrated into the convenant with God that a different community was their home. Christianity was centered in the Lordship of a Saviour Christ whose Kingdom was based on his death, resurrection, and coming judgment. Nock points to the novelty in "the **motive** which it supplied for good conduct and the abhorrence of past bad conduct which it demanded. [It was] devotion to Jesus who had suffered so that sinlessness might be within man's reach and . . . love of the brethren, altogether more lively and far-reaching in Christianity." Further, "it claimed to give **power** to satisfy its requirements; . . . grace . . . and the special gift of the Spirit."[2]

Biblical Materials

The Jewish and Christian communities were constituted by conversion, which is essentially a "turning from and turning to."

With Abraham it was **from** "country and kindred and father's house" **to** "a land that I will show you" ("he looked forward to the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God," Heb. 11:10).

With Moses and Israel in Egypt, it was **from** "sitting with the fleshpots and eating bread to the full . . . and dying in service to the Egyptians" **to** "going into the wilderness to serve Jahweh."

With Caleb and Joshua it was to have been **from** "dying in the wilderness" **to** "receiving from the Lord a land which flows with milk and honey." But conversion was refused. So they died. . . .

With Samuel it was an appeal to convert **from** "a king to govern us like all the nations" **to** "Jahweh's being king over them." But conversion was refused. So they were given a king. . . .

Jesus' own appeal was the conversion **from** "an evil and unbelieving generation" **to** "the kingdom of God [which] is at hand." That conversion response was typified by Peter: "Lo, we have left everything and followed."

Peter's appeal, on the occasion of the coming of the Holy Spirit, was **from** "this crooked generation" **to** "forgiveness and . . . the gift of the Holy Spirit [in] . . . devotion to the apostle's teaching, and fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer . . . (and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own) . . ."

Should we have mentioned Elijah on Mt. Carmel, and the appeals of Jeremiah (3:2; 32:40), Ezekiel (e.g. 18:30), Joel (2:12f) where the prophetic thrust is on **re**turning **to** God with whom they are in covenant relation?

And should we make more explicit the specific context of the exceptional kind of conversion of Saul of Tarsus in his turning **from** being a "circumcised Benjamite Hebrew, Pharisee zealous to the point of heretic hunting, and blameless in righteousness under the law" **to** "knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, and [being] found in Him with a righteousness of God through faith in Christ?"

It is ever again the crucial response of "turning around" in repentance (most often **metanoia** in Greek), or "turning" or "re-turning" to covenant with God (**shubh** and its derivatives in Hebrew—a verb of motion) that determines a future of salvation for Israel and the nations in the fulfillment of God's purposes. The shift **from** "away from God in judgment of death and destruction" **to** "with God and His righteousness in the salvation of life and peace, and fellowship in the Kingdom" is at the heart of conversion reality. Here there is neither ambivalence nor ambiguity; only an either/or possibility.

Biblical Versus Modern Understanding

The word "conversion" itself is used only once in the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. When Paul and Barnabas passed through Phoenicia and Samaria enroute to Jersalem, they reported "the **conversion** of the gentiles" (Acts 15:3), the main subject of the Jerusalem conference. There James spoke of that same reality as the "Gentiles who **turn to** God." Where the 1611 King James version translated "to convert," the RSV most often uses "to turn." The modern understanding of conversion emphasizes the psychological and affective aspects of inner experience (emotion, release, feeling, self-consciousness) as over against the biblical accent on reversal of direction, transfer of loyalty, and change in commitment. It is this latter biblical emphasis on what Nock calls "a new life in a new people" which should orient our understanding of conversion.

Biblical conversion is typified in the story of Jonah's ministry at Nineveh. Jesus used it as a type of His own ministry. A whole population of the capital city of an empire was so wicked in its greatness that it was brought to the bar of the universal judge. He responds to the case with a call addressed to a prophet to "go and cry against it." When Jonah answers finally, the Lord sends him to "proclaim to it the message that I tell you," more specifically the overthrow of the city within forty days.

Scripture reports that the people believed God, proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth. Under the numinous impact of the word of judgment, they became as nothing. In reality this was a self-imposed "overthrow" in response to God's presence as experienced in the ministry of Jonah. Ultimately, the king himself in sackcloth and ashes proclaimed a dry fast for man and beast as total response to God: " 'Let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every one turn from his evil way, and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we perish not?' When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it" (Jonah 3:8-10).

Faithfulness to the Word of the Lord through Israel's unwilling prophet changes history because it results in the temporal salvation of a city normally seen to be outside of God's covenant with Israel. Because a people turn collectively **from** wickedness and violence **to** God, He in His holy freedom turns **from** anger and judgment **to** pity and mercy. His turning is salvation; theirs is conversion and . . . salvation.

Here, then, is the type of Jesus' own ministry. Foreseeing the destruction of Jerusalem, He knows that it is **possible** to save it; Nineveh is the precedent. He proclaims the imminence of the kingdom of God (judgment and salvation) and the call to repent—a massive appeal to turn to God, to conversion, even to the extent of sending out of seventy apostles to **all** the cities. If

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Jerusalem would not turn, the coming of the kingdom of God could only mean judgment and destruction. The Ninevite salvation only heightens Jesus' sense of outrage at His own people, who refuse His appeal. He sees the Jonah-converted Assyrians among the accusing witnesses of the Judgment Day who will condemn Israel for refusing to turn to God when invited by one "greater than Jonah" (Matt. 12:40f).

As Peter so boldly pointed out at Pentecost, Jesus' death was due to Israel's refusal of conversion. But the events between His death and Peter's sermon (resurrection, ascension, Pentecost) show God's turning in pity and mercy. Thus Peter appeals for repentance. As in the Jonah story, in God's mercy a new Nineveh was created through a popular conversion, so in Jerusalem a new Israel is created through the conversion of the three thousand. It is that new people, the new community of faith, that becomes the evidence and vehicle of salvation in Christ for Judea, Samaria, and the nations. The old Jerusalem which refused Jesus' strategy of overthrowing itself in conversion was overthrown later in the Zealots' fight with Rome in 70 A.D.

The future belongs to the converted who respond to God's mercy in the prophetic word and ultimately in His Messiah who is seated at the right hand of God "till I make Thy enemies a stool for Thy feet" (Acts 2:34f). From Abraham to Peter, as typified by Jonah and fulfilled by Jesus, conversion is seen to be essentially eschatological. It means a moving into and a participation in "the last days."

But it is not enough just to turn from the past to **any** future; rather it is from the past judged by God to that future offered by God in and through the Messiah. This Messiah Jesus, interpreted throughout all of the New Testament as the **Servant (Ebed, in Hebrew)-Messiah,** and even more as the **suffering** Servant-Messiah of the Servant-songs in the Isaiah writings, is "to establish justice in the earth" (42:4). It is the new and different posture of that Servant as fulfilled by Jesus that makes Him the "greater" (than Jonah or even John the Baptist) one, the beginning and the ending of the "last times."

The early Christians' awareness of the uniqueness of the servant-stance was what made them out to be a new people in the new times. They saw themselves to be "servants" in the wake of "your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29f).[3] The same Spirit that was upon the Servant in Isaiah 42:1 (and 61:1 where He is seen as proclaimer of Jubilee) was upon Jesus (Mark 1:9-12) and now upon them (Acts 2-3). Justice and peace are being fulfilled in the new community. Peter calls it the "times of refreshing . . . from the presence of the Lord [until He] send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the holy prophets" (Acts 3:20f). Conversion is **to** that fulfillment and expectation. Paul will understand that same Spirit coming upon the Gentiles as the new people being created in the major cities of the northern Mediterranean. This is the ultimate fulfilling in Jesus the Messiah of what was promised to Abraham in his blessing of all nations (cf. Galatians 3:14).

Henceforth, conversion is seen as a turning in total faith to the reigning and coming Servant-Messiah, Jesus. This new life is fulfilled in the Spirit by baptism and is the ultimate movement in history. Conversion is eschatological but also total in the sense of being for all peoples; the converted model a pattern intended for all—a new shape for human life and community based on Jesus.

Personal Conversion in the Biblical Context

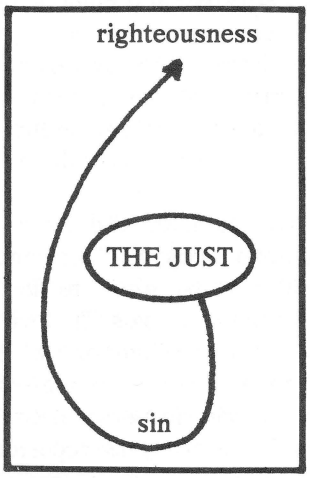
This universal people's movement of conversion is nevertheless seen to be personal, for persons are the **locus** of the turning. Those who in Christ are integrated into His Servant-community can say, "The old has passed away; the new has come." The New Testament recognizes that personal context; indeed, it is a part of the uniqueness of that picture that so much recognition is given to individual persons as such (Cf., e.g., Rom. 16). Yet little accent is put upon the description of the subjective—spiritual and psychological, affective and emotional—aspects as Western peoples are wont to do. Western culture is preoccupied with the psychological and affective. Manipulation and control of these realities has become a multibillion dollar science and industry. It is studied in order to give market dynamic to an economy of abundance.

The personal character and context of conversion is underlined in John's gospel: "born again" to Nicodemus, "drink the water I shall give" to the Samaritan woman, "eat my flesh" to the crowds filled with bread; "not walk in darkness but have the light of life" to the crowd on the last day of the feast, "enter by me—the door."

This same diversity in personal conversion contexts is evident in Paul's ministry as reported, for example, in Acts 16. There was Lydia, whose heart "the Lord opened." Then there was the slave girl with a spirit of divination which Paul charged "in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." In contrast to both, there is the jailer "about to kill himself. . . . Trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. . . . He washed their wounds and was baptized at once." And finally, closely related and yet much different, there are the "households" of both Lydia and the jailer. But more important Paul uses great variety in language in his epistles. Here the appeal, teaching, conceptual explanations and interpretations will be somewhat different from his missionary message and call to repentance in the Book of Acts. The latter will almost always have the thrust seen in the Jonah-Jesus type while his epistles will speak of the real **experiential** diversity of the peoples who have turned **to** Christ **from** their personal (spiritual, social, ethical, religious, political) contexts outside of Christ. An examination of that language only emphasizes the fact that the existential and experiential reality of conversion seen as justification is one of many Pauline descriptions.

Context of Conversion	From	To	Through Jesus
Justification	Sin	Righteousness	the Just
Reconciliation	Enemy	Friend	Mediator
Resurrection	Death	Life	Resurrection-Life
Regeneration	Corruption	Incorruption	Life-Spirit
Salvation	Distress	Deliverance	Saviour
Salvation	Lost	Found	Saviour
Communion	Outside	Access	Head
Election	Nations	Kingdom	Messiah
Forgiveness	Debt	Cancelled	Sufferer of Loss
Recapitulation	Old Creation	New Creation	Lord
Hope	Despair	Assurance	Hope
Redemption	Slavery	Freedom	Redeemer
Adoption	Foreigner	Son	Heir
Victory	Hell-Satan	Heaven-God	Conqueror
Grace	Guilt	Pardon	Grace
Healing	Sickness	Health	Healer-Doctor
Deliverance (exorcism)	Possession	Self-possession	More Powerful One
Sanctification	Sin-profane	Holiness	Holy One

JUSTIFICATION



Each one of these lines is a precise, personally experienced context (sometimes collectively, as with Jews in general as typified by Paul). The personal conflict between sin and righteousness is resolved by Christ the Just, and that conversion is known as justification. It is Christ through justification who frees Paul from his sin.

The different aspect of the Word of Christ that becomes effectively functional within each "box" is variable. Here it is cross, there it is the resurrection; elsewhere it is both together. It may be His obedience, or in another place His "in the flesh"-ness, or His reign, or His coming, or His anointing by the Spirit. Each aspect obviously is a part of the whole; yet the Word comes into specific contexts in specific ways so that Christ is apprehended through the filters or grids of those who have turned to Him.

It is of course much easier to see if we look through biblical language and words rather than contemporary missions and understandings of conversion. The writers of *The Lonely Crowd*[4] make the enlightening observation that "tradition-directed" societies tend to express alienation in terms of shame; "inner-directed" societies with increasing accent on individuation tend to express relational alienation in terms of guilt; and "other-directed" modern mass societies tend to express such alienation in terms of anxiety. This can be a fruitful understanding for those involved in the Christ-given mission of the Servant-Community.

For example, F. B. Welbourn[5] points out that the missionary brought to Africa the gospel of justification and grace whereas the societies to which that message was taken were not guilt-oriented. He asks what it would mean to preach the gospel to a shame-oriented people? Or again, Jacques Ellul[6] demonstrates remarkably how Western (especially French) philosophy and thought have literally come to an impasse in anxiety-creating despair and hopelessness. This is not seen as a theological concept or category, but an actual, existential state of humanity. Neither of these illustrations—the one from a context of pre-Christian religion and the other from Western secular thought—begin with the need for justification. Conversion is hardly functional in the context of that "box."

Reading Riesman, Welbourn, and Ellul together could easily suggest that Western Christian missions to Africa, living out the anxiety of a mass-industrial society, tried to convert a shame-oriented people in pre-modern contexts, through a gospel appropriate to an individuated guilt-oriented society. Modern Western society needed freedom from guilt and this shaped Western Protestant understandings of Paul. But this was not necessarily where the crunch came for the Africans; in fact Western mission structures tended oftentimes to increase shame as understood by Africans. Thus, we can understand partially how the separatist, independent, spiritual congregations in Africa—without excluding Christians in mission-created congregations—have "heard" a different

gospel than that being preached, have been "converted" in terms of a different mental-spiritual-social "box" and have sorted out biblical emphases other than those which were mission taught.[7]

Personal Conversion in Contemporary Western Context

Just as there has been in the West a dominant theology of justification by faith, so there have justifiably been other theologies for other contexts. Could we even suggest that the Lord-disciple theology, in contrast to Luther's, that functioned within some of the sixteenth century left-wing reformation movements, was also contextually defined by the strong hierarchical ordering of society?[8] in this vision the direct relation to the new Lord practically eliminated the socio-political, hierarchical structures yet functioned creatively in new holistic (social, political, religious, economic) communities that threatened the sacralism of the time. Given the biblical view, the crucial question about conversion is not the personal (or collective) contexts that give rise to modes of conversion in types of theologies, but the type of human community a particular theology of conversion creates.

Today we recognize the legitimacy—and even necessity because of the nature of incarnation—of liberation theology, Black theology, theologies of contestation. Theologies of hope, of humanization, of self-fulfillment, etc., all attempt to speak to experiential and existential realities. Following the New Testament, we can in fact make a list of "boxes" which define contemporary contexts of conversion.

Context of Experience	From	To	Through Jesus
Acceptance	Rejection	Acceptance	Love
Direction	to err about	to aim at	Call
Festival	Boredom	Joy	Feast-giver
Meaning	the absurd	the reasonable	Word
Liberation	Oppression	Liberation	Liberator
Becoming	Nobody	Somebody	Invitation
Fellowship	Solitude	Community	Presence
Creation	Chaos	Order	Creator
Breakthrough	Blocked	Open	Future (Omega)
Order	Confusion	Peace	Structure
Dialogue	I-it	I-you	You
Conversation	Monologue	Dialogue	Other
Decision	Indecision	Choice	Unique
Fulfillment	Nihilism	Becoming	Being
Solidarity	Exploited	Defended	Leader
Humanization	Inhuman	Human	Human
Growth	Infantilism	Maturity	adult
Concientizacion	Powerlessness	Action	Sustainer
	Fatalism	Hope	

Conversion and Syncretism

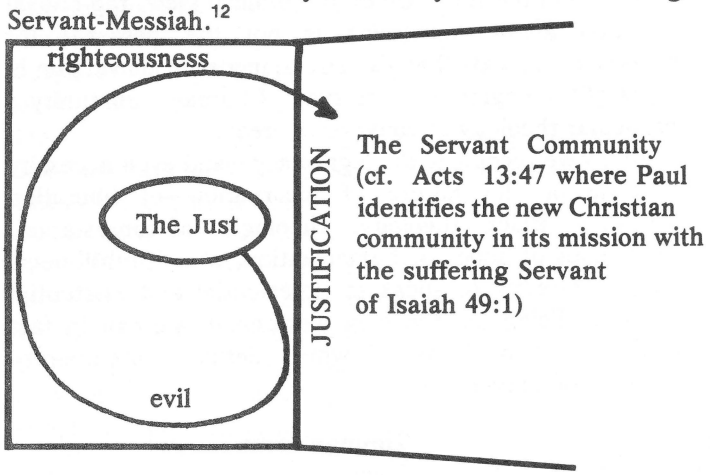
It must be noticed that when we shift to contemporary human contexts of conversion it is easier, in contrast to biblical language, to observe how the gospel can be turned into religion similar to the first century rivals of Christianity. Using these modern "boxes" we can see how easy it is to "bring Jesus into my box" to make Him "mine," to "use Him" for my purposes. Thus conversion can become a thing that happens strictly within the self, a personal experience with no particular relationship to God's purposes "for the establishment of all things,"—the Kingdom come and coming. What we have not always seen is how this is possible also with the use of the biblical categories. When justification (or any of the other boxes, biblical or modern) is seen to be the goal of the gospel and the intent of conversion (e.g., turning **to** justification), the apostate character of syncretism becomes apparent (cf. the "box" on page 4). Happily, it was the Lutheran theologian Bonhoeffer who best helped the past generation to see this with his classic description: "justification of sin rather than that of the sinner."[9]

Not all "justification" is Christ-centered, if we review it in the community of the Spirit of the suffering Servant who as Lord fulfills history with "the almighty meekness of the Lamb."[10] Nor is all election Christ-centered, in the Servant (**Ebed**) sense. Nor is all redemption, or healing, or hope. And in the modern context we can say that all self-fulfillment is not Christ-centered, in the **Ebed** sense of the word,[11] even if the word "Christ" is used. But neither is all solidarity, nor liberation, nor blackness, nor openness.

The Axis of Conversion: The Servant-community of the Servant-Messiah.

Each of the contexts or boxes are potential syncretistic religious realities unless Christ is seen as the one who translates persons out of those specific personal (or collective) boxes into new community where justification,

redemption, election, healing, hope, self-fulfillment, solidarity, liberation, blackness, openness become functional in a new community defined by Jesus the suffering Servant-Messiah.[12]



Of all these contexts it must be said, as Paul wrote of the expressions of the Spirit in the church at Corinth: "There are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (I Cor. 12:6f) ". . . so that the church may be edified" (I Cor. 14:3,4,5,12,26).

Conversion means in terms of understanding God, a turn **from** the many gods, or from no god, or from "belief in" a distant, unknown, or inactive god **to** "the living God." In an understanding of the religious, it means turning **from** myth **to** event and history (covenant, exodus, exile-return, Jesus-event, church in conflict with the powers. . . .) It includes turning **from** the periodic shift in sacred and profane (ritual, initiation, festival) **to** holistic sacred lifestyle (charism, forgiveness, service). In relation to time, it means turning **from** past **to** a new linear future; and **from** the "old age" **to** the (christological) "new age." In terms of spiritual power, it means turning **from** its use for primarily material orientation (fertility, success, prosperity) **to** primary ethical preoccupation on the one hand; it means turning **from** prayer as manipulation of power **to** prayer as discernment for decision and release of redemptive creativity. To be human means turning **from** instrumentalism (i.e., people are to be used) **to** personhood (i.e., unique value of person in creation, redemption, gifts, development) and a turning **from** balance of powers, and equilibrium in roles, **to** mutuality (forgiveness, gifts, service, subordination). Conversion in specific regard to community, means turning **from** ethnicity, tribalism **to** open covenant based on Jesus' lordship (within the church) and **from** geographic and temporal parochialism (nationalisms) **to** the universal (present and coming) Kingdom.

All this, it seems to me, is clear in Jesus' fulfillment of the Jonah type. Yet more basic than all this is a foundational spiritual turning. This change is of the very essence of conversion, effected according to the biblical witness by God, the Holy Spirit. And it is at this level of ethos that it seems to me that all of the other aspects of "turning" have to be ultimately discerned and judged. Reality divides into either the "Promethean" or "**Ebed**-ist" mentality. Roger Bastide[13] suggests that all "development" today in the third world or anywhere requires a "promethean"[14] mentality. This signifies man's perpetual state of dissatisfaction in spite of his increasing achievements in mastering and apparent control over his world and destiny and his compelling ambition to push further and further into the unknown, but presumably open, future. Today conversion is **from** such a "Promethean spirit." It is **to** a mentality that I have chosen to call "**Ebed**-ist" in order to follow Isaiah in accentuating the suffering-servant quality. The current concept of "servanthood" is distorted by modern notions of service growing out of commerce and industry, on the one hand, and patronizing notions of charity, on the other. **Ebed** defines that quality brought to us in Jesus the Messiah. The "**Ebed**-ist" spirit would be reflected in human renewal of covenant with God in His purpose for reconciling all of humanity in justice and peace through Jesus Christ. This is the basis for a covenant among men and **women** of solidarity in repentance and hope. It is expressed in Holy Spirit-endued service, in confident **meekness**, through the liberating proclamation and protest of His Word, healing for wholeness, suffering for righteousness, total participation in freely restored community, as experienced in a local congregation of people where Jesus is confessed as Lord. It is that difference which can give Christian mission today its either/or quality and restore radical meaning to conversion. Thus resurrection does not form the starting-point of revolution from which anything becomes possible, and for which the future is completely open, as Roger Garaudy says. But God's incarnation in Jesus, His active obedience for justice and peace, His suffering unto death, His resurrection, His reign through the Spirit, His coming again in fulfillment of all things, all announce, on the contrary, that human community is possible under God in Christ, in the shape of Jesus of Nazareth. Because of Him such community is at the very crux of history, as well as its end.

"The Kingdom of God is at hand; be converted, and believe the gospel," is yet the essential cry of that community.

David A. Shank served with Mennonite Board of Missions in Belgium 1950-1973. He has undertaken a new assignment in West Africa working among African Independent Churches. He is author of ***His Spirit First and Who Will Answer?***

Footnotes

[1]A.D. Nock, *Conversion: the Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933.

[2]Idem, 218 ff.

[3]Henri Blocker, *Songs of the Servant: Isaiah's Good News* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1975), 21, underlines what is not often seen: "the need to recognize the pattern laid down in the songs *for our own service*. . . . Jesus Himself recalled the last Servant song when teaching the disciples the way to glory; and Peter quoted from it with the comment that 'you should follow in his steps' (Mark 10:41-45; I Peter 2:21)." (italics added)

[4]David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The Lonely Crowd,* Yale University Press, 1967 (13th Printing), 9-26.

[5]F. B. Welfourn, "Some Problems of African Christianity: Guilt and Shame," in C. G. Baeta (ed.), *Christianity in Tropical Africa,* Oxford University Press, 1968, 131-38.

[6]Cf. Jacques Ellul, *Hope in Time of Abandonment,* Seabury Press, 1974, especially "Self-critical Interlude," 156-66.

[7]John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Bugunda,* SCM Press, 1958, 253, illustrates how this happened in the Ugandan context. But it is also true that any minister or teacher of the Word knows how many messages his hearers have "heard" that he or she has never "preached."

[8]I was impressed by and reported this aspect of the context of conversion in "Faith and Doubt in Menno Simons," an unpublished seminar paper submitted to Fr. John Dunne, Notre Dame University, 1967.

[9]Cf. D. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship,* Macmillan, 1946, Chapter 1, for his discussion of "cheap grace" and "costly grace."

[10]Norman Grubb used the happy and significant phrase "Almighty Meekness" as title for chapter 7 in *As Touching the Invisible,* Lutterworth Press, 1966, 34-41.

[11]In fact it is probably the myth of self-fulfillment which has defined most totally the religious context of conversion in the contemporary West. See especially Jeremy Zwelling, "Religion in the Department of Religion," in Myron B. Bloy (ed.), *Functions of Faith in Academic Life* (*Religious Education,* 49:3-S, May-June 1974) S94-S137. John Dunne has effectively pointed this out in his writings where "self-fulfillment" is seen to be the contemporary Western myth, as definition of what life is, given the fact of death.

[12]This "religionizing" through emphasis, as compared to the major biblical thrust, is illustrated within the contemporary scene by Kenneth Kantzer's description of evangelical self-understanding: "[Evangelicals are] people who have received God's cure for the haunting and indelible guilt of sin and that corrosive emptiness of the heart for which Christ is alone the enduring solution. For this reason they have a message to share." (David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (eds.), *The Evangelicals: What they believe, who they are, where they are changing,* Abingdon Press, 1975, 41.) Such a tack can be one of the very real entries into Kingdom reality (which I have myself used in preaching, e.g., in *Who Will Answer?,* Herald Press, 1969) as conversion structure; but to define the gospel impact by a single emphasis or reduction is precisely the individualizing and existential spiritualism which ignores in its emphasis the fundamental biblical thrust. To the materialists of His time Jesus warned about "gaining the whole world and losing one's soul." Here the word might well be a warning about "gaining one's soul, and losing the Kingdom." For the biblical message has a different accent than that.

[13]Cf. Roger Bastide, "Messianism and social and economic development," in John Wallerstein (ed.), *Social Change: The Colonial Situation,* John Wiley and Sons, 1966, 467-77. Bastide here expands an idea put forward by Georges Gurvitch.

[14]Prometheus, we recall, was the god of fire in Greek mythology who stole the fire from heaven in order to animate human life; but he was punished by Zeus by being nailed to a mountain where a vulture kept on eating out his liver.

WHERE...IN HOME MISSIONS?

Paul N. Kraybill

The earliest home missions efforts in the Mennonite Church can be traced to the initiative of Mennonite preachers and lay people reaching out to new communities. It was not necessarily seen as mission work but was simply spontaneous action by leaders of vision and concern. Already before the Civil War, Virginia Mennonites were traveling into the neighboring mountain areas to preach. Later the influence of the Methodist frontier circuit rider prompted others elsewhere in the church. There was also the familiar tradition of visiting scattered members, which took on added significance as Mennonites pushed their way westward and northward to new North American frontiers.

During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the Mennonite Church moved rapidly into a new era. Itinerant preachers enlarged their efforts and a growing number of people shared their vision. Revival meetings and Sunday schools broke in upon the quiet traditionalism of rural Mennonite congregations. The so-called Great Awakening had a forceful impact, and the quietism of many years began to give way. Various persons—John F. Funk, John S. Coffman, John M. Brenneman, and others—were influenced by the heady movements in Protestantism. Through pen and preaching they set out to invigorate and challenge a slumbering and lethargic church.

Their insistent pressures brought a tension into the church which was to last for many decades and leave the church radically changed. The humble, pious, and quiet lifestyle of a rural people with strong traditions and deep convictions was never to be the same. In the milieu of developing activism and new programs, a whole new motif began to emerge. There were those who bitterly opposed what they sensed as flamboyance and superficiality. Opposition to missions and Sunday schools, now so trivial and arbitrary at this distance, must be understood in terms of a people confronted by a new kind of gospel that cared little for the distinctive aspects of Mennonite heritage and conviction. Many sensed ever so dimly, what now seems suddenly to be more real, that the seeds of easy grace, civil religion, and popular Protestantism were being sown in those early days. Yet the biblical imperatives to mission were not easily withstood by a people deeply concerned about obedience to the Word, and the exciting trends of the day proved irresistible.[1]

But the Great Awakening not only moved the church into the mainstream of Protestant activism. It also produced a countermovement of self-defense. Mennonites developed a missionary program patterned largely after Protestant models. At the same time they were developing a legalism that was not really inherent in Mennonite tradition. Firm convictions, a strong sense of nonconformity to the world, and a deep concern for a humble, self-effacing, quiet lifestyle were in the best of Mennonite tradition. But the legalism that sealed these convictions into arbitrary forms must be seen at least in part as an instinctive means of preserving Mennonite identity in the face of a serious but irresistible threat.

So, for almost half a century, home and overseas missionaries labored to shape a witness under a double handicap. On the one hand, there was no theology or strategy of missions compatible with and expressive of the Mennonite tradition. On the other hand, they were saddled with a burdensome emphasis on external, legalistic requirements which all too often failed to communicate the deeper and legitimate values from which they sprang.

Where Have We Been?

Sunday school conventions in 1892 and 1893 gave impetus to the first home mission project which opened in Chicago in 1893. A similar quarterly meeting in Pennsylvania led to the opening of the Welsh Mountain Industrial Mission at New Holland in 1898. By 1900 several more missions were opened and by 1925 at least 20 had been organized.

These early projects sponsored by local groups gradually stimulated the organization of more broadly-based church structures. Unlike the General Conference Mennonite Church where organization was developed specifically for the purpose of mission activity, in the Mennonite Church form followed function (cf. E. G. Kaufman, *The Missionary Interest Among Mennonites*). The Mennonite Evangelizing Committee was formed in 1882 in the Elkhart, Indiana, congregation to collect funds for the support of evangelistic efforts by such persons as Funk, Brenneman and others. Subsequently a successive series of groups was formed. These merged in 1906 to become a churchwide "general board" for mission activity, the Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities.

The developing mission activity (home and overseas) was a specific factor also in the organization of the Mennonite General Conference which predated the mission board by nine years. In that organization the tension between the creative urge to mission and the desire to conserve and protect traditional Mennonite values came into focus. Needed was a unifying body to give guidance and direction to the new movement in face of the fear of worldliness and loss of young people that might result from the new exposure that mission activity was bringing. Yet it was significant that so early in our mission history there was a close link with a conference (church) structure which concerned itself seriously with mission.

The first quarter of the century (1901-1925) saw slow development with limited membership growth. In that quarter the membership of the Mennonite Church nearly doubled, but little of it resulted from overseas or home missions activity. Significantly, the places chosen for opening programs were mostly urban and included many major cities of the United States and Canada.

In the next quarter (1926-1950), membership increased by only a bit more than 50%. Of that increase, a significant amount (25%) could be attributed to the newly organized home mission congregations. Interestingly, during this period, overseas membership growth was slow. After 50 years of mission activity, overseas membership was still less than 3,000 persons in 1950 while the identifiable home missions membership was more than double that.

In the third quarter of the century (1951-1975), the tables turned and we came into a remarkable period of growth overseas. In that 25-year period, the total North American membership increased by 60% from 64,500 to 103,650. In the same 25-year period, overseas membership increased by 860% from 2,808 to 26,940. In 1950, the overseas membership was 4.6% of the total Mennonite Church membership; in 1975, it was 20.6%!

Meanwhile, another phenomenon was taking place. Historically, Mennonite congregations in North America averaged well over 100 members. This has dropped over a 50-year period to a figure that now stands well below 90. For the denomination of over 100,000 members it is notable that the median-size congregation is now in the neighborhood of 50, down from a historic high of 75.

Strategic Developments

The first 25 years of home mission activity in this century reflected a heavy concentration on a rather classic type of city mission activity. It appears that never since 1925 has there been such a proportionate emphasis on city mission activity.

In the post-World War II period Mission Board Secretary J. D. Graber stimulated a new wave of home mission activity with the slogan, "A mission outpost for every congregation." By 1956 Nelson Kauffman, the newly appointed home missions secretary, began to talk about "Every congregation a mission church." This was a significant turn toward a new view of the church being in mission rather than reaching out to do mission elsewhere. The strategy began to shift to starting new churches rather than missions. But this strategy moved the focus away from classical forms of city mission activity to a more rurally-oriented outpost or colonization approach.

At the same time efforts were made to urge some of the older city missions to move toward becoming indigenous. Already in 1950 J. D. Graber was projecting an objective for city missions to establish "self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating" congregations in the style of the classic indigenous principles often applied to overseas work. By 1960 plans were formulated for a number of congregations to move to a direct subsidy relationship, replacing the imprest fund which implied control by the board.

John A. Hostetler observed in his 1954 study, *The Sociology of Mennonite Evangelism,* that active interest in religion as reflected in those who responded to the home mission witness was often associated with crisis situations. This undoubtedly grew out of the high level of compassion, service and sharing which motivated many workers. He also noted that "Most of the urban missions lack leadership with sufficient training and experience to perpetuate the Mennonite system of values." He supported this by noting that many persons were utilized in teaching programs whose background was in other than Mennonite churches. He observed that urban missions related mainly to the old and the young but lacked resources and attraction for young, mature adults.

Paul Peachey in *The Church and the City* (1963) confirms that missions was a primary factor in the formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church structures. He notes that church extension really became the essential motif for their rather remarkable urban expansion. A deliberate strategy was developed to serve the needs of Mennonites moving to the city. So urban General Conference congregations were begun with a core of ethnic Mennonites.

On the other hand, the Mennonite Church was more heavily influenced by the Great Awakening and began mission activity which tended to be modeled on Moody's revivalism which had its roots in the city. Thus the Mennonite Church emphasis on city missions in the early days reflects the popular Protestant pattern rather than the true character of Mennonite life. This mission activity was paralleled by a rejection of the city by rural congregations. Provincialism and a deep-seated conviction that "you can't build Mennonite community in the city" militated against a strong city program. In later years there developed an idealism about the city that viewed it as the place where new forms can emerge unrestricted by the structure and handicaps of provincial rural community life. But this was belied by the tendency of the more acculturated Mennonites who moved to the city to ignore the city mission congregations and abandon all Mennonite identity. For the Mennonite Church tension between rural Mennonites and urban mission congregations essentially handicapped and limited the strength and vigor of the home mission movement. On the one hand, there was a rather patronizing attitude toward the poor and the sinner with a fixation on the more sensational problems and evils of the city. On the other, legalism seemed to reach its climax as mission workers rigidly applied principles of separation to the new convert to an even greater extent than was done in the traditional Mennonite congregations.

All of this combined to leave a stamp on missions that exaggerated and perpetuated the ethnic distance between the traditional Mennonite congregations and the newly emerging congregations. The tension and results of that distance remain with us to this day.

Where Are We Now?

By 1960 the home mission program had proliferated with a wide variety of projects and techniques. Among these could be named Mexican, Spanish, and Negro work; institutional; voluntary service; summer Bible school; migration and colonization; itinerant evangelism; rescue mission; rural mission; alternative service; disaster service; Jewish evangelism; radio; literature; camping; Bible correspondence;TV spots; colportage; etc. etc. more authentically out of the life of the church. Many of the methods reflected a broad and wholesome integration of witness and deed. There was a strong congregational commitment as evidenced in congregationally oriented outposts, spawning of new churches, migration, etc. There was a strong emphasis on discipleship commitment by lay persons who got involved in summer Bible schools, VS, MDS, I-W, etc. There was a flexibility in style as congregations emerged out of dozens of differing kinds of programs. The vigor of those years reflected a growing conviction for involvement by every member. John Howard Yoder made an impact by his emphasis on a self-supporting missionary vocation (cf. *As You Go,* 1961).

Likewise the shift toward the congregation took on even more meaning in the early 70's as the congregation itself became the model for mission. John W. Miller's paper, "Church Reform and the Missionary Congregation in the 1970's," stimulated excitement and interest in the house church as a new frontier for mission. In many congregations small group fellowships and Bible study groups became the focal point for evangelism. The congregation itself, as a loving, caring fellowship, increasingly came to be seen as a missionary instrument in contrast to the older personal evangelism techniques of scattered individuals.

This subtle shift from cross-cultural evangelism to evangelism based on existing core groups signalled a

healthy new vitality in the church but it shifted attention away from Home Missions.

Board and District Conference Relationships

In the 1960 *Mennonite Board of Missions Annual Report*, Nelson Kauffman reported that Home Missions, (an administrative division of the Board) was relating to 30 projects including 25 home missions locations. At the same time, in the *Mennonite Year Book* for 1960, there were 345 unorganized (e.g. mission congregations) listed. In the 1955 Mission Board *Annual Report,* Board Secretary J. D. Graber, had spoken of the philosophy of the Board with relation to district conferences. He perceived the Board administering pilot projects and programs that were beyond the capability of the conferences. This policy was further articulated and developed so that by 1960 the Mission Board could approve a statement of policy shifting the focus of home missions from starting new churches to assisting districts and the congregations as requested in church extension programs. In 1962 the home missions secretary stated unequivocally that "The task of home missions belongs to district, congregation, and home."

The first meeting of a Home Missions Council representing the presidents of the district mission boards was held in 1964 and out of the group a steering committee was formed to serve the Council and to act as counsel and reference committee for the Home Missions Division. This continued for several years but later was dropped in favor of a Board-appointed Home Missions Committee.

The close relationship between Home Missions Division and district conferences reflects a high view of the church in that attempts were made to relate home missions projects to conference rather than continue them in a dependency relationship to the Mission Board.

This was in harmony with the strong role played by the conference in Mennonite polity, a role that has emerged with new significance since the Mennonite Church reorganization in 1971.

However, there were other factors at work in the early 70's. A major development was the merger of minority ministries programs with Home Missions. In spite of the policy of subsidizing district-administered programs which would assume decreasing involvement by Home Missions, the merger suddenly expanded Home Missions involvement. A parallel development was the growing concern being raised by conferences regarding the substantial amount of funds contributed by them which are routed through Home Missions only to have them returned to subsidize their own conference projects.

Minority Developments

Minority congregations focus the issues of Home Missions in a more visible and dramatic way than any other. Many home mission churches are not minority congregations, but enough are of different ethnic background that they merit attention as a case study. Minority congregations do comprise a significant portion of the Mennonite Church since they constitute approximately seven percent of the North American congregations and three percent of the North American membership.

One might pinpoint developments in attitudes toward minorities by looking at various phases in home mission strategy:

a. Pre-1950: Ethnic separation, e.g., Negro missions, etc.
b. 1950-1965: Parish approach/integration
c. 1965-1975: Black and Spanish consciousness, ethnic awareness
d. 1975- : Responsible ethnicity

The Urban Evangelism Committee developed as a committee of the Mission Board in 1950. In 1955 a Negro Evangelism subcommittee was appointed. Meanwhile, the Board undertook publicity on minority concerns. By mid-1964 the Board was sponsoring conferences on race relations in various parts of the church. In 1968 the Urban Racial Council was formed to respond to growing pressures from minority groups in urban areas. This then became the Minority Ministries Council in 1969.

In the passionate climate of the 60's, minority issues received dramatic and sensational attention. By this time many home mission churches involved minorities, and there was considerable agitation within the Mennonite Church for new understandings of and response to the needs of minority peoples. The emergence of the Minority Ministries Council sparked a creative and exciting ray of hope for new visibility and involvement.

The Minority Ministries Council—a separate, self-administered structure, but parallel to and funded by the Mission Board—began to function rather vigorously in 1969. However, misunderstandings, tensions within minority communities, administrative and financial problems and overlapping concerns between MMC and Home Missions in relating to the same congregations brought a review of that model.

In the end a new plan emerged in 1973 providing for integration of minority concerns into the total structure of the recently reorganized Mennonite Church. The assignment of minority staff to the General Board as advocates for minority concerns plus minority staff in strategic program administration positions were essential features of the new plan. The major program emphasis of the Minority Ministries Council in congregational development and assistance was folded into the administration and budget of Home Missions.

The aspirations and expectations of minority congregations were now focused on Home Missions as they previously had been focused so intensely on the Minority Ministries Council. But the identity and ownership which that Council provided, which had never before been realized, was threatened now by the new structure. For many this was a retreat from newly found gains. Others viewed it as a logical next step in making the cause of the

minorities the concern and priority of the entire church rather than of a self-contained segment. In the end the plan was approved and implemented. The experience that followed is instructive and worthy of note here.

a. The Minority Ministries Council was the first ray of hope that a church structure could be developed that was essentially comprised of, by and for minority persons. The excitement that structure stirred speaks to its significance in touching a sensitive need.

On the other hand the integration philosophy which undergirded the merger of Minority Ministries with Mennonite Church structures, may in retrospect have been more the vision of Anglo Mennonites than of the minority Mennonites, although the model was jointly formulated and accepted.

b. There are varying attitudes toward the success of the merger model. For many minorities, it has been less than satisfactory. It has not been possible to meet fully the expectations of finding sufficient qualified persons to staff program boards and agencies or to fill positions on boards and committees. Further, those who are in these positions often feel unable to cope with the highly developed and specialized structures and frequently their agenda is lost in the larger stream of program priorities. Commendably, persons with Black and Latin ethnic background are literally present in many positions but unfortunately often find themselves a small minority unable to make a substantial impact on the structures of which they are a part. Integration has come to mean fragmentation and submergence instead of corporate planning and action as a minority community.

c. The traditional Mennonite emphasis on church has allowed mission churches overseas to move beyond the paternalism of mission to mature adult independence. This goal has been expedited as mission structures were withdrawn and mission congregations formed autonomous conferences. There are now 16 such conferences overseas related to the Mennonite Church. These conferences provided for self-realization in a culturally appropriate model. Autonomy and responsibility moved them to maturity. This is symbolized in the church-to-church relationships that have been developing as expressed in fraternal visits, church leaders' exchange, etc. Overseas churches are actually seen as sister denominations on one-to-one basis. The Mennonite World Conference provides a tangible symbol of this where all Mennonite denominations meet as equals even though they were formerly in an older/younger, sending/receiving, missionary/missioned relationship.

Meanwhile, in North America the district conference continued as the central locus of polity and decision-making beyond the congregation. As an inter-congregational entity, it provided the congregation with fellowship, leadership assistance, polity, identity and resource.

For minority congregations, however, a peculiar problem existed in the cultural gap between the Swiss-German ethnic background of the conferences and the Black-Hispanic background of minority congregations. For them, integration with conferences offered little more than submergence in a majority group where identity and visibility was almost certain to be lost.

So the destiny of ethnic congregations in North America was often predetermined by a passion for integration, a concept that may have served more in resolving feelings of guilt among Anglo-Mennonites than it did in providing meaningful relationships for churches of other cultures.

d. The merger of the Minority Ministries Council interests with Home Missions has focused undue attention on Home Missions. Funds originally raised for the Compassion Fund (Minority Ministries) now flow through Home Missions. The expectations originally focused on the Minority Ministries Council now center on Home Missions. Hence, it is not surprising that minority attention is focused on the control of Home Missions. The cultural distance and the sometimes inadequate resource and attention available from district conferences allowed this to happen by default.

At a stage of development when maturity, autonomy, and church self-awareness should be emerging, there is a fixation on an institutional structure with control as an emotional issue. Dependency is being perpetuated rather than healthy autonomy and interdependence.

e. There has been a healthy new dimension in the emergence of Black and Latin Caususes. These were formed as part of the merger plan and were intended to give exposure and visibility to representatives of minority congregations who want to work at common concerns and interests within their own cultural context.

These councils have provided opportunity for interaction among minority leaders which is in itself a significant opportunity for leadership development. This is one of the more significant developments since the merger plan was initiated. In the absence of other culturally homogenous inter-congregational groups, these groups are developing mature leadership and strong identity in a commendable way.

The present pattern, however, leaves this group with no administrative responsibility—in a limbo between the conferences in which they have limited involvement and the institution where they relate in a dependency pattern. (It should be noted here that two local districts representing minority congregations have emerged with certain administrative responsibilities, i.e., the South Texas Mennonite Coordinating Council and the Spanish Council in Lancaster, Pa.)

Where Are We Going?

Richard Showalter, writing in the November 1975 issue of *Mission Focus* contrasts the success in church planting by Mennonite missionaries abroad with the comparative lack of success in North America. He identifies the sociological problem of recognizing that Mennonites do live in a multicultural context. However, much mission work in North America has not shared the same cross-cultural

sensitivity that was developed abroad. Consequently, there has been a tendency to ignore culture and dislodge people from their own cultural background. He insists that inviting people to become Christian does not mean obliterating their personhood nor their culture. It is not appropriate to call people to come out from their kinship and friendship structures.

It follows that cultural particularity has been over shadowed by our preoccupation with universality of the gospel and the integration of all cultures in the idealism of the kingdom of God.

So it must be observed that Home Missions has only been moderately successful. After 75 years we have not yet succeeded in freeing churches that have integrity in a minority community. We have insisted on congregational integrity with respect for cultural values. But there has not emerged a pattern of church development on an inter-congregational basis that has cultural homogeneity, where representatives of ethnic congregations can develop culturally appropriate forms of leadership, decision-making, polity and fellowship.[2] Only when that happens will minority congregations be freed to grow not only in number but in self-respect, maturity, and spiritual vigor.

The task ahead involves these elements.

1. The application of indigenous principles needs to be seen in the context of developing culturally homogeneous inter-congregational districts—rather than emphasizing self-sufficient congregations, isolated from each other.

2. Every emerging home mission congregation must be helped to find a responsible district or conference connection where a culturally compatible relationship can emerge, and where there is opportunity for interaction, fellowship, leadership, and decision-making.

3. Dependency on home missions should be replaced by empowering effective decision-making bodies who can be entrusted with fraternal assistance funds for which they become responsible.

4. The respective roles of Home Missions and district conferences must be reviewed with renewed emphasis on resource to conferences rather than subsidy to congregations. Wherever possible conference fund should be applied directly to projects within the conference. Block grants to conferences needing assistance should be considered. Administration by conferences should be emphasized with Home Missions staff available to develop and sharpen conference staff skills.

5. Strategy for cross-cultural church planting and development in North America should become a Home Missions priority commensurate with the priority on overseas ministries and congregational evangelism.

6. The respective roles of the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries Evangelism Committee and Home Missions must be clarified and the focus of each more clearly established.

7. A high view of church must be promoted with the emphasis on responsible freedom in decision-making rather than dependence on mission structures.

8. The concept of integration must be rethought, recognizing that responsible ethnicity and cultural identity do not need to be denied in seeking to achieve a larger fellowship where there is true integration.

From 1958 to 1970 Paul N. Kraybill was executive secretary of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities. In 1970 he assumed responsibilities as secretary for the Study Commission on Church Organization and the following year was appointed to be General Secretary of the Mennonite Church. He is also executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference.

Footnotes

[1]See Theron F. Schlabach, *A New Rhythm for Mennonites—The Mennonite Church and the Missionary Movement, 1860-1890* (Mennonite Board of Missions, 1975), for more complete background.

[2]Donald A. McGavran has been a vigorous proponent of this thesis and has given it theoretical and methodological formulation in his many writings on church growth. Cf., *Understanding Church Growth* (Eerdmans, 1970).

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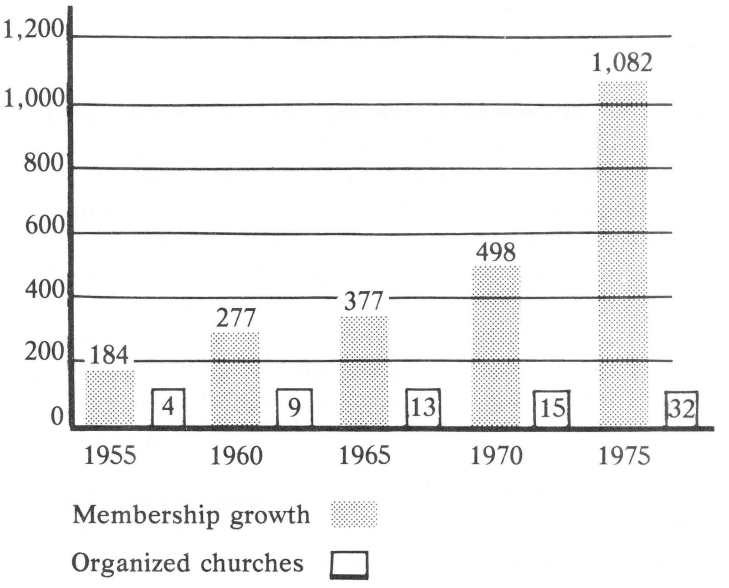
CHURCH GROWTH AMONG SPANISH-SPEAKING NORTH AMERICANS

Jose M. Ortiz

If we take a retrospective look at the Spanish Mennonite work, we must conclude that growth has taken place. A difficulty arises as we try to locate sources for research. Few written materials and reports exist which identify the determining factors that played major roles. In the absence of materials, quite often I will be tempted to do some free-lancing.

Internal growth of a congregation or a society is classified as organic, qualitative, and quantitative. We will discuss the last. The term implies the recruitment of persons for the kingdom of God by calling them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives and incorporating them into a worshiping and a witnessing Christian community.[1] Once those numerical growth factors have been identified, they will provide a basis for entering into the more reflective areas of incarnational, organic, and conceptual growth. That will possibly set up the agenda for the Latin church for the coming 25 years.

These churches emerged out of Mennonite missionary commitment that was expressed in developing city missions, in setting up Spanish departments in Anglo congregations, and in redeploying missionary personnel who returned from Latin America and Voluntary Service units in needy communities. The first Spanish involvement took place in Chicago, Illinois, in the late thirties. The rest is history, and the following chart indicates the phenomenal numerical membership growth in new congregations. Membership increase for 1976 was 26 percent and Menolatino pastors have set a goal of 2,000 members in 50 established congregations by 1980.



Orlando Costas, a Latin American missiologist, makes a pitch for incarnational growth. This calls for the involvement of the community of faith in the life and problems of the social environment. It is not imperialistic, nor alienating, for it is a means of the liberating action which generates hope and announces the advent of the kingdom of God. That emerges out of a group of believers who have experienced solidarity, covenant, and a sense of history as a part of the people of God. That ought to be the next chapter for the Menolatino church.

Why Growth?

Four brief reasons attempt a rationale for numerical growth.

1. Salvation is the agenda. Since the time of the Conquistadors, the Spanish have been known for two passions: a passion for acquiring land and a passion for winning souls.[2] The latter is still with us. Emerging new churches, as in the period of the Book of Acts, have the "kerygma" or proclamation spirit. The preaching of the Word is central, and all other church activities are satellites around the Great Commission. Once a group is consolidated, then the "didache" or teaching ministry emerges. At this point the Latin churches are still in the "kerygma" stage and salvation is the agenda. More developed churches *have increasingly sought to develop an array of inducements that would appeal to the widest range of potential members, yet with diminishing emphasis upon the one incentive unique to churches, that given preeminence by conservative churches: salvation. . . .*[3]

The church calendar does not follow a master plan on evangelism; it is determined by the Spirit ("where the wind blows"). As with the poet a message is provided "as you go." The altar is the place where the action is. In traditional churches the action takes place in the pew, the educational wing, the fellowship halls. The Corinthian church was polluted by the smell of wine; contemporary churches are polluted with the smell of coffee. Latino pastors tend to **make** their pulpits burning bushes where the fragrance of the presence of the Lord is felt. The altar is the place for conversion, vocational commitment, consecration, prayers for healing and forgiveness. There is a lot of "foot traffic" at the altar and quite often with the shoes off. The net result is the reconciling, retaining, and recycling of people.

Salvation is the agenda and people circle around that even when the altar is taken to more secular places such as the street corners, the condominium, parking lots, the factory, or hospital halls. A raw and uncamouflaged gospel is proclaimed. It speaks of a sinful person, God's saving grace, and the necessity of repentance in the spirit of John 3:16—and people still respond to the Christian persuaders. Possibly we have realized that at this stage in history our people cannot get fully involved in the great ills of society since we do not have the expertise, the personnel, nor the resources to meet those needs. But what we have received, that we share: the salvation experience at the personal level. If that agenda is diversified, possibly it will be reflected in the growth of the church.

2. Menolatino Pastors: "They Left Their Nets." The Caonabo Reyes family is a profile in courage. They felt called to establish a Spanish mission in Washington, D.C., and sought funds for support toward the close of the Mission Board's fiscal year. The options were to get in the waiting line, do the lobbying, or "leave their nets." They did the latter. They sold their house and moved to the new community. One year later a dozen persons have been baptized, and a church has emerged. The program includes radio spots, counseling help for illegal aliens, and Bible correspondence courses, in addition to the preaching and teaching ministries. It all started with a sense of call, without financial support, and without too much excess baggage. The money, the training, and the expertise emerged as they went.

This case repeats what happened in the Book of Acts. The Jews shared their religious traditions and the Greeks their philosophical heritage, but Peter and Paul (Acts 3:3) were able to share what they received from God. Our (Menolatino) pastors do likewise.

They have come from the production lines of factories, white collar jobs with the government, and "no collar" jobs in the farming fields. Now they are pulpit persons. They know the language of the sinner and the hurts and needs of the secular man. They can address his questions, possibly the very ones they held themselves prior to their calls to Christ.

If education means acquiring a diploma and the accumulation of credit hours, our Latin pastors have hardly any education. Only four pastors have shared their training in a Mennonite Bible school (The Mennonite Bible Institute of Puerto Rico); a few others have attended interdenominational or Pentecostal schools. The growth in their congregations cannot be attributed to formal education or being exposed to Mennonite evangelistic strategy.

If we take a panoramic view of pastoral cases, we might be able to survey and suggest the type of pastors that our congregations will need, thus giving us a clue for future pastoral training. It seems that the most suitable pastor to minister in our congregations is a breed of Pentecostal-oriented persons who can work within the free church tradition. I do not think those two traits mutually exclude each other. That kind of pastor can move the church to the stage where three basic elements of church life (generating leadership, self-funding, and developing new churches) are realized.

The Spanish church agenda is salvation. Present pastors have left their nets and are serving in a priestly fashion at the altar. On the basis of human knowledge, the kind of people they are handling are difficult agenda, but "God is

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Litho in USA

giving the increase."

There are still Anglo personnel involved in Spanish churches, and if denominational policy is consistent with overseas missions, Anglo pastoral involvement will continue to decrease and phase out. That is called strategy; it simply means Latin pastors for Latin churches. Hopefully, that will not be called radicalism.

3. A Favorable Sociology. The experts in people movements are saying that persons in transition are prime targets for conversion to Christianity. Latin mobility becomes a liability as persons and funds leave the community, but it becomes an asset as they get established in other communities as "beachheads" for new missionary outreach. Latins have been on the go, with no time to accumulate wealth, develop connections within the established social order, or professionalize their skills. True to the very nature of the gospel, it appeals to the dispossessed, the alienated, and the uprooted ones. Our churches are geared to serve that "clientele" and response is positive. That pattern was similar to primitive Christianity, the people of "The Way" and "by the way."

This concludes the triad that has been developing: salvation is the agenda for clergy who have left their nets and are able to preach at the crossroads of a people's movement. Probably those are reasons enough why the churches have grown.

The statement above that people in transition are responsive to the gospel also creates a series of more serious questions that we cannot ignore if we want to claim some of the prophetic heritage. Some elements of change are entering the Latin scene; these must not be overlooked. Immigration laws are getting tighter, and if the unemployment picture in the USA continues, fewer Latins will be tempted to come to the USA and possibly some will return to their place of origin. Farming is becoming more and more mechanized and agribusiness will leave less room for the migrant laborer. Younger Latino parents are realizing the cost of wandering around the country. Following the harvest does not bring any security. Therefore, there is an urge to get established, learn some skills and integrate into a community. To those, becoming Protestants fosters the "americanization" process. The Latin population, now estimated at around 16 million and possibly exceeding the 25 million mark by the close of the century, will become more sophisticated, more established, more inclined to secure material goods, and thus increasingly less accessible for the gospel.

A second reaction to the earlier statement regarding the responsiveness of the dispossessed to the gospel should raise a red flag among affluent Christians. Does it mean that material wealth creates such a sense of security that people are tempted to live without God? In the Old Testament the prevalent mentality was that economic progress was an indication of God's favor. Accumulation of wealth today seems very often the by-product of the exploitation of others. North Americans ought to have a sense of historical and moral judgment not to exploit the newcomer and then give them a Protestant creed. According to history it happened before to the Indians of both North and South America. That is the agony and the ecstasy of being evangelized in a society intoxicated with wealth.

4. A Theological Emphasis. Recent research into the theology expressed in the fastest growing churches indicates that "the theological thread that runs through the process is a very dogmatic fundamentalism in a charismatic setting. Seven pastors (out of eight surveyed) identified themselves as Charismatics."[4] According to the chart in this article, phenomenal growth is taking place in Menolatino congregations in the seventies, and most of the evangelism explosion has taken place in churches related to the Lancaster Spanish Council. Jose Santiago indicates that the reason is "because we give room for the Holy Spirit." Revival, manifestation of gifts of the Holy Spirit, prayer, fasting, and witnessing are part of the religious experience. Without apology some pastors freely acknowledge that their ministry is effective due to the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." There was a time that it was not "kosher" to speak that way and some went "underground." Now the tide is changing; speaking in those terms is fashionable.

This leads to a Latin "liturgy" that incorporates the existential dimension of the faith—what God is doing now. Christ becomes the object of praise and prayer in a very subjective way. Salvation today tends to be liberation from eternal damnation. There are indications that the pastoral agenda is moving beyond that mentality, but it looks like most of the congregations are operating at that point. The present is the only possession; therefore the program tends to be a now-oriented service in the light of the life to come. If the trend continues, it can be safely stated that the North American Latin experience has not lost affinity with other Christians south of the border. In celebrating what is happening now, rather than recollecting what God did in the past, we may find an answer why response has been favorable.

Toward a Consolidation of Growth

It has been stated previously that present growth does not necessarily mean response to an evangelization strategy. It looks like a cartoon to speak of a master plan when pastors are saying that the growth is due to the Spirit and the Spirit blows where it pleases. Present Latin church administrative patterns were a response to the upheaval of the sixties and seventies when the issues were social change and integration. That has at least given the platform to discover more authentic expressions of

administration that will supplement and help facilitate the congregation in its evangelism agenda at the local level. In order to achieve that, pastors who minister successfully at the altar must sit where denominational plans are shaped. Otherwise the resources available could be directed to all kinds of agendas. The consolidation stage is emerging, and responsible planning must be designed to take care of the developments.

Some projections have been made concerning the ideal pastor to minister in Latin churches. Let us briefly picture a church which could be a model. It is a church which grows numerically, identifies, sends, and gives partial support to its Bible school students; develops a "daughter church"; ministers among migrants; and its pastoral team (husband and wife) participates in the program of the larger church—whether the conference, the Latin Council, or the women's groups on a national level. That church is located in Moline, Illinois, and is pastored by Mac and Mary Bustos. That congregation expresses a balanced growth and possibly could set the model for congregational development.

Speaking of evangelism within the Mennonite Church in general is not easy. Joe Haines indicates that the three faces of evangelism are community, service, and proclamation[5] and warns of a proclamation without the other two elements. Glenn Brubacher in his article, "Evangelism: We have no common Understanding,"[6] struggles to verbalize the Mennonite tradition which is strong in being a caring community, but when it comes to evangelism on a person-to-person basis, is not there. The pastoral perspectives of Haines and Brubacher should challenge the Mennonite church worker to enter into the harvest and be as successful as the Mennonite farmer with his fields. Maybe the Latin Mennonites need to grow in being a community (koinonia) involved in service (diakonia) and the Anglo church must face the fact that kerygma is the Christian church agenda. Both mutually supplement each other's vision of what it means to be God's people today.

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Footnotes

1. Clifton L. Holland, *The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles* (South Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1974), pp. 445-446.
2. R. H. Bainton, *El Alma Hispana y el Alma Sajona* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Editorial La Aurora, 1961), p. 21.
3. Dean Kelly, *Why Conservative Churches are Growing* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 92.
4. Jose M. Ortiz, "The Process of Incorporating New Members in Spanish Speaking Mennonite Churches" (unpublished dissertation, Doctor of Ministry Program, McCormick Theological Seminary, March 1976), p. 3.
5. Joseph Haines, "Evangelism's Three Faces," *Evangelical Visitor,* (June 10, 1976), pp. 4, 5.
6. Glenn Brubacher, "Evangelism: We have no common understanding" *Mennonite Reporter* (September 30, 1974), p. 5.

CHRISTIAN LOVE: ITS FOUR DIMENSIONS AS A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCIENT CONFLICT BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS

Donovan E. Smucker

I. Agape as Primary and Sacrificial

Agape is the deepest and truest fact of the Christian faith. It still comes as something of a shock to find Paul, the theologian of faith, declaring that eloquence, prophecy, mystery, knowledge, faith, good works, and martyrdom are **nothing** without love; or to note Jesus saying, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And the second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. **On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.**" Love is thus primary in relation to God, neighbor, and self.

In the history of the Christian church, love to God has often been falsely expressed to make it appear that it stands by itself in the realm of piety unrelated to ethics. Actually, the New Testament is clear that there is no love of Christ without love for the neighbor. This truth blocks any alliance between true agape and a subjectively otherworldly, sentimental, inner pietism, or between agape and a high and lifted-up sense of awe before God's majesty, so high that it overlooks the neighbor. Without a sacrificial concern for the neighbor (an acted parable of God's sacrificial concern for us), love to God is a pietistic illusion or an unhistorical orthodoxy. Moreover, out of a truly agape-motivated love for the neighbor flow the original energies for distinctively Christian service to society.

Meanwhile, the debate on the nature of Christian love continues. The two major parties are the sacrificialists and the mutualists. On the whole I am more sympathetic with the sacrificialists but would frame the issues somewhat

differently from either party to this debate.

With the sacrificialists I would agree that love is the gift of God's gracious coming; that love is not an abstract ideal but a concrete relationship with Christ, and, hence,with the neighbor; that love is not limited to the lovely but is bestowed on the ugly, the enemy, and the downtrodden. It follows from the crucial role of agape that every human crisis is basically a crisis of love: that men feel lost, lonely, futile, insecure, and separated without love and then angrily vent their aggressions on themselves and their neighbors. They seek liberation in loveless hate and violence even when they know it is suicidal.

Against the sacrificialists I question the success of the motif-research of Nygren in trying to force the Bible through the narrow definition of uncaused agape. In Paul's agape hymn in I Corinthians 13 he lists self-sacrifice as one of nine ingredients of love: patience, kindness, inner-peace, humility, courtesy, unselfishness (love does not insist on its own way—RSV), good temper, guilelessness, and sincerity. This suggests the necessity of looking at other meanings of agape. Cross-checking the New Testament references to love further suggests elements of response and obedience which define agape.

In terms of confessional theology, sacrificial agape does have rich meaning by virtue of redemptive encounter in Christ. In terms of philosophical theology one is driven to restudy eros in order to understand the relationship between agape and eros. The work of D'Arcy, drawing on De Rougemont and Hunter, suggests analogies of self-sacrifice and self-assertion in natural life. Eros can be rational, self-regarding mysticism and also a bewitched romanticism. Yet eros can be other than self-regarding mysticism or bewitched romanticism. It can be the desire and striving that are fulfilled in agape.

Another objection to the sacrificialist view is suggested by psychological studies which raise questions regarding the annihilationist view of self. The importance of self-acceptance seems as crucial as the necessity of rejecting sheer egocentricity. The annihilationist view creates self-hatred and eventual suicidal or homicidal outbreaks. Clinical studies and case records shed much light on the problem of selfhood. Agape, and agape alone, can speak to the bondage of the will uncovered by the counselor; but the counselor raises questions concerning the rejectionist-annihilationist view. Confessional theology must thus remain in conversation with other disciplines.

With the mutualists I would agree in stressing community as the crucible in which love operates and towards which it moves. Here again the emphasis on community, cooperation and brotherhood find recognition in philosophical concepts. Kropotkin has suggested that Darwin must not be interpreted purely in terms of a raw survival of the fittest since mutuality is a basic part of nature's definition of the survival of the fittest. The analogies are from the ant, the bee, and packs of wild horses, the birds, and the beavers. All species have mutual assistance, but some species practice mutual assistance more radically than others. To be sure, competition and conflict are present, but they exist along with mutual aid.

If scientific studies suggest deep roots for mutuality, philosophers can be mentioned who tend to give the idea universality and methaphysical reality. Whiteheadians, for example, stress love as a universal cosmic principle operating as the strongest fact in social life; as the integrative principle most operative in the universe through the growth of values; and, in general, as a binding, integrating, cementing ingredient of the cosmos.

Against the mutualists I question the affirmation that self-realization is the cause or the effect of community. This seems less Christian than the paradox spelled out by Reinhold Niebuhr that the truth is in self-realization **through** self-sacrifice (agape in Christ). Niebuhr, however, lacks a doctrine of Christian community, despite his understanding of larger corporate problems. A sounder, fuller view would be: **self-realization through self-sacrifice in Christian community.**

Apart from the debate between the sacrificialists and the mutualists, I have found much help in my own Anabaptist background where love is a controlling and regulative principle. It is obvious that the heirs of the Reformation left wing are constantly tempted by a ghastly legalism and a vapid isolationism. (I know this as a person bearing a definitively Amish family name.) Yet the following insights appear to be fully valid despite their abuses:

First, agape is not a mere abstraction that serves to hold together a system of dogmatics. Rather, agape is incarnational in the life and death of Christ. Here God's gracious love is manifest in a unique and concrete way. The Divine and the human, the inner and outer histories, meet in a Person where agape is the key. Thus, love originates in God but is now clothed in the glory and tragedy of human life. This protests against all christologies, ancient and modern, which find the life of Jesus unimportant, which ignore the synoptic gospels, which start with a dogma and scarcely ever go to history. The Jesus of history and the Christ of faith are joined in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the divine.

Second, agape is not a static reality since Jesus Christ seeks a response. As Amos Wilder puts it, ". . . the claims of the Kingdom take the forms of claims of discipleship to Jesus in the accomplishment of his errand." Discipleship is the response of human love to God's love in Christ. At this juncture two different possibilities appear in face of the outgoing character of God's love in Christ: **1. response** expressed upward to God in worship and obedience and outward to the neighbor in service; **2. no response** expressed in alienation, separation, hostility, persecution, conflict, and indeed, in

martyrdom itself. Christ's agape operated at both levels whereby some responded and others eventually succeeded in placing Him on the cross.

Although agape is thus a reality in both individuals and groups, there is an unquestioned eschatological dimension which suggests that agape is never fully regnant in history. I join with the Anabaptists in protesting against a purely futuristic eschatology and against a fully temporal realization. Agape, like the kingdom or reign of God, is here and is coming.

Correlated with the face of response versus no response and with the dimension of eschatology is the reality of God's agape as suffering. Divine impassibility, divine *actus purus* is rejected. Though the Hartshorne development of this idea has been a stimulating discovery, I have long accepted God's suffering relationship to the world as an essentially biblical fact which has rich ethical implications. This is my formulation: God is a suffering lover whose love is frequently unrequited. Christ suffered **for** us on the cross; Christ suffers **with** us in human tragedy and misery; Christ suffers **because** of us in our sin and rebellion. Therefore by suffering for us, with us, and because of us, Christ seeks a response expressed in discipleship leading to community. The purpose of both divine and human suffering is to end suffering and not merely to bear it ascetically.

All this has many implications for theology. We have creation as the place where divine and human suffering occur, and we have creation as the setting for the historical event of Christ and His agape. We have the Christ of agape incarnationally related to history in redemptive suffering. We have agape operating redemptively with the evangelical objective of response and reconciliation.

The God who is love has revealed Himself in Christ where love is visible as sacrificial, communitarian, incarnational, evangelical (seeking a response), and suffering.

Love as agape is the idea **par excellence** of the Christian faith, hence, it is primary in its claims. As primary, it is essentially sacrificial; yet there are other aspects to agape which are important.

II. Love as Brotherhood and Mutuality

The life of agape is lived in fellowship, brotherhood, and community. Agape is creative, and agape is social, thus creating community.

First of all, this community is to be understood as the Christian community which, in turn, serves and builds for the larger human community. The most appropriate understanding of the community which agape builds is that of a brotherhood of love. Here the brother is visibly involved in the meaning of love. Members in the Christian brotherhood bear unlimited liability. The church is thus a brotherhood of love. This is superior to the view of the church as an impersonal station dispensing grace; to the church as an intellectual depository of dogmatic truth; to the church as a link in the chain of historical continuity; to the church as a social organization for comfort and inspiration. As a corporate society the brotherhood is originated, sustained, and characterized by agape.

On the other hand, there is the Niebuhrian claim that the essence of mutual love is reciprocity, a fact that introduces prudential considerations where agape is compromised by ego-claims. On first consideration it appears that agape seeks response in brotherhood-community but dares not demand reciprocity. Does this, then, preclude agape at the level of reciprocity? While there is an insight here which needs to be considered, I believe that agape and reciprocity are not mutually exclusive.

Agape is related to reciprocity in community; brotherhood is a response elicited by agape. In order to express brotherly love, brethren make themselves limitlessly liable one to the other for the basic risks and contingencies of human existence. Some patterns of institutional mutual aid tend to provide specified kinds of care for specified amounts of financial contribution—as, for example, a home for the aged, or a general or mental hospital. An element of reciprocity does enter in here and, unchecked, can be destructive of agape. But fundamentally there is unlimited liability for the brother **regardless** of the ego-claims which he can make. And, as we shall further show, the Christian brotherhood has the obligation of sacrificial love to the neighbor outside the brotherhood. In Pauline terms the Christian must do good unto all men and especially to those of the household of faith. The failure of the church to be a redemptive community by concrete ministry to the creaturely needs of man is a great scandal. This is not to say that the empirical churches do not offer anything at this point, but rather to emphasize that the local congregation, as such, tends to be atomistically fissiparous, leaving services too much to the modern welfare state and to private commercial insurance protection.

In the Anabaptist tradition mutual aid is of two general types: the communal or communistic and the semi-communal. The fully communal type, as practiced by the Hutterites (children of the Anabaptist movement with the oldest Christian communism in the world), has all property in common in a theocratic society. The church and community are one. There are private apartments for families but eating is in common; work is specialized and related to a common treasury; ownership is corporate.

The semi-communal pattern has private property in the form of home and business yoked to a radical doctrine of stewardship, in a brotherhood-centered existence with common liability for all risks and common devotion to Christian witness and service. Any autonomous view of property is rejected since the lordship of Christ is supreme and the service of the neighbor through agape is the basic

responsibility. It is my conviction that true Christian community is either communal or semi-communal with the latter as the pattern for most Christians. Atomistic individualism I reject as incompatible with agape.

Either of the above patterns becomes dangerous precisely when isolated from agape. Here the group turns in on itself. Agape is dissolved into nothing but prudential reciprocity. The end product, as in the Amana society, is a decline and change of the pattern into pure self-interest and private enterprise. Limiting mutual love to the in-group is the devil of Christian brotherhood as legalism is the devil of Christian discipleship.

As a matter of fact, the mutual aid brotherhood created by Christ's love is to be two things: **1.** a community devoted to Christ with a brotherhood life of worship, fellowship, service, education, and culture; and **2.** a base for an **outgoing** movement of missions, social service, social action and change, cultural enlightenment, and creativity. Here the truly sacrificial element in mutual aid transcends the factor of reciprocity. Hospitals are set up by the church for members of the church **and** for all other creatures needing the ministry of healing. Schools are set up for members of the church **and** for all others needing enlightenment. Relief work is done for the needy of the church **and** for all others regardless of race, color, and creed.

The brotherhood thus has a concrete, specific dimension. Here is a society in which a new way of life is demonstrated—**now**! No fully eschatological postponement. No return to the medieval *corpus Christianum.* No feeling that **only** the state or the union or the fraternal order provide welfare services. Valid as these state and fraternal aids are, the church now offers concrete reality in brotherhood. Moreover, this inner fellowship transcends caste and class.

From this rich, joyous life of agape, redeemed and inspired men and women go **out** not on the basis of prudential reciprocity as the iron law of history but on the basis of agape which is always in debt to the neighbor and to God, This, it seems to me, introduces the valid elements of mutuality into history without limiting love to mutuality or sealing mutuality off from agape.

The work of agape as community and brotherhood will find the dialectical conversation with philosophical and empirical efforts important. The latter may appear as these secular disciplines' rebuke to the empirical church which lapses from catholicity into caste. Racial, social, cultural, and nationalistic distinctions often find theological defenses. In the deliverance of people from temporal evil the Christian brotherhood will always be humble about the contributions of secular agencies in relief, medicine, institutions, and in concern for justice and for the ministry to leisure time activities. In the area of cultural enlightenment the church will usually be debtor to other educational and intellectual agencies. In general, sociological studies will suggest the all-pervasive role of human culture and the utter impossibility of resigning from it.

The references to mutuality as spelled out by biology in section I, the references in the same section to philosophy pointing to the fact of love as an integrating factor in the cosmos, the studies of anthropology on competition and cooperation among primal peoples, these and other areas of concern will stretch, test, and move the Christian community to look beyond itself in the name of agape.

III. Agape and Justice

If the cross is the symbol of agape and the golden rule of mutual aid, an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth are the symbol of justice. Let me hasten to add, however, that the *Lex Talionis* is an advanced ethical principle restraining raw unlimited revenge. Implicitly imbedded in this much-attacked Old Testament principle is the classical *suum cuique*—rendering to each man his due. Nowhere is a dialectical relationship between confessional and philosophical theology more needed than in connection with love and justice. For the Western theory of justice is based both on classical philosophy and Christian thought. The intertwining of law and equality around the Christian concern for righteousness is a complicated and long story. Its ramifications in natural law theory are also important.

In any case, the problem for agape is raised by the ego-claims and the self-interest presupposed in *suum cuique.* The demand for rights, for what is due, for punishments commensurate with the crime, for damages commensurate with the injury, the integration of struggles for justice with struggles for power, the elements of idolatry in movements for social, political, and national justice—all these painfully pose the problem for agape.

Love and justice, as Nieburh argues, are dialectically related. Love is both the fulfillment and the negation of justice. Perhaps the fulfillment of dimension is made clearer by reference to the illuminating exegetical word-studies of righteousness that Paul Ramsey utilized so effectively in the first chapter of his *Ethics.* The righteousness and mercy of God are interdependent. In the Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul views righteousness in three ways: as ethical conduct demanded by the law, as salvation which is a gift of God through Christ, and as ethical conduct which is demanded of a Christian. This recalls the imperative in Micah to do justly, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God. Love as fulfillment of righteousness or justice, in this sense, is less difficult to grasp than Niebuhr's emphasis on the abrasive ego-claims in the *suum cuique* set in a ghastly power struggle. Yet the Ramsey chapter must not obscure the egocentric aspects of justice as expressed in Western jurisprudence and Western social movements.

Consider, then, how justice is fulfilled in love and how

love is the negation of justice.

The concern for equality has a real note of compassionate concern for the brother. He is equal in creaturely needs and he is equal in redemptive privileges. Agape brings all this to full fruition.

The negative ministry of justice saves people from falling **below** the minimum standards. The unemployed are protected from starvation, the blind from illiteracy, the handicapped from unemployment. This ministry is fulfilled in love when love goes **beyond** the minimum which justice rightfully establishes. The tragedy comes when the empirical church denies the right of people even to the minimal claims of justice—though, to be sure, some Christian voices, speak from agape and not caste.

Structures of law provide an orderly, somewhat objective pattern to delineate rights and duties, to punish evil-doing, and to resolve conflict. In face of these structures love may appear as the **negation** of justice, since government under law is always, as Laski said, some kind of balance between consent and coercion. Justice often rests its case on coercion by way of a loveless club which tries to move embittered reactionaries forward or tries to kick zealous reformers and revolutionists backward. Love is constantly at work seeking to extend God's righteousness by consent and thus to transform justice into a work of love.

The concern for justice under the pioneering work of the church in the name of love has led to secular services, reforms, and even more radical action. Love knows that it must work quite early before the quest for justice becomes hard and loaded with revenge. In Lebanon, for example, love would be critical of the older establishment which brought about ruthless P.L.O. attacks; and also of P.L.O. as a movement in which hate has dissolved much of the legitimate quest for justice.

Thus justice is a partial response to agape. Yet in reverencing justice, we are urged to go beyond it.

Agape urges us to operate much of the time beyond justice. This is true because love is not only fulfillment—it is an addition to or a completion of justice. It is also negation.

Brunner has very brilliantly spoken to our problem when he writes: "There is an antithesis between love and justice. The antithesis does not sever the bond between them nor the bond sever the antithesis."

The antithesis rests on the sacrificial roots of agape in God's grace as over against the ego-claims of justice in the impersonal structures of law and the power sanctions of coercion.

The bond relates agape to righteousness in the more biblical sense. The bond is built in the heroic self-sacrifice of many men in the struggles for justice—men who sacrifice time, money, status, and life itself in order to bring a richer, fuller life to the weak and downtrodden of the earth. Behind this sacrificial devotion to the cause is likely more than *suum cuique,* a compassion for humanity profoundly akin to love. Yet this bond does not sever the antithesis since quests for justice ultimately seek to render each man his due.

IV. Agape and Nonviolence

The *kairos* time of the Martin Luther King movement offers new formulations and implications for biblical agape as a call to nonviolence. Prior to King the Christian response centered on nonviolence as an ethical response to the suffering love by which the Christian experienced forgiveness and acceptance. God's grace was a paradigm of nonviolence which called for a gracious response. The mood was not in the imperative (we ought to be nonviolent), but the indicative (partake of what God has done for us). It is still an authentic path but it is difficult to translate into collective action.

Another pre-King option was the vocational route, a highly individualistic response: "I cannot participate in violence and power politics because I am called to live with the weak and the powerless. I am marching to another drummer. His name is Jesus Christ." This was a powerful dimension in Catholic monasticism and Protestant individualism. Franz Jagerstatter in a remote Austrian Catholic community, Thomas Merton in a Trappist monastery, General Patton's daughter in a Virginia university community—these are samples of the unpredictable manner in which vocational pacifism may be expressed. One can be grateful for it without finding it adequate for a larger ethical answer in church or society.

Martin Luther King started with the important role of law but made several basic qualifications. An unjust law is no law at all; the supporting authorities, of all people, were Augustine and Aquinas. Hence, civil disobedience for unjust laws. Yet King declared that law is always inferior to love. Desegregation, he insisted, is possible through law. **Integration is only possible through love. Love is beyond the law.**

Deeply immersed in the New Testament and the moving impact of gospel preaching, King first tested the efficacy of nonviolence by noting the ghastly legacy of bitterness in countries and groups liberated by violence. He vowed to affirm nonviolent love at every level—to angry neighbors after his own home was bombed, to the people of Birmingham after the Baptist Sunday school was bombed while students were gathering, to his jailers, to himself in Memphis the night before he died when he suffered through premonitory feelings about the end of his life and the final confirmation through his wife's supportive convictions.

To those who do not see clear boundaries in the King movement between church and society, there is yet another path for agape-love to take: agape as the sign and seal of the Messianic community which speaks truth to

power and makes the witness of love to power—the rich new position of John Howard Yoder.

Beyond Yoder are those who are using the tools of philosophy and the social sciences to delineate more complex answers in the larger society.

The Saviour with the loveless, bloody sword is the common rejection point for all of the above positions.

V. It is a joy and a burden to know the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Donovan E. Smucker has had a distinguished career as an educator, writer, and pastor. Since 1970 he has been professor of Social Studies at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

The Great Commission—An Editorial Comment

In the popular mind Christian missionary activity arises from the Great Commission. This command represents Jesus' final words to His disciples—His last will and testament. Never mind where these words are found in Scripture. The missionary mandate is a straightforward order which the faithful carry out.

When one turns from the popular notion to scholarly theologies of mission, one finds that the Great Commission plays a minor—even insignificant—role. What accounts for this disparity? His scholarship failed to serve the needs of the masses, in this case missionary enthusiasts, by doing its work in isolation from the rest of the church? Historically, however, middlemen have "brokered" between ivory tower and pew. Missions promoters and propagandists have popularized the slogans and concepts which have guided the missionary movement.

Two new books give occasion to reflect on the Great Commission and the way it has functioned both in the theology and the practice of mission. Max Warren, one of the most influential missionary leaders in this century, has written of his abiding commitment in *I Believe in the Great Commission.*[1] Richard R. De Ridder's exegetical study of Matthew 28:18-20 first appeared in 1971 in a limited edition as a doctoral thesis under the title *The Dispersion of the People of God.* It has now been issued and retitled by the American publisher as *Discipling the Nations.*[2] Warren's book is responsible popularization while De Ridder's is solid biblical scholarship.

The Great Commission has been used improperly in the interpretation and promotion of Christian mission in at least three ways.

The Great Commission has been misused when it has been seen as a proof-text. The Matthew 28:19a phrase, "Go ye therefore," or Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (KJV), were the basic texts. The imperative voice appealed to an activist people. Popular support rallied around a vision of conquering unknown territory, of pioneering on distant frontiers. Western culture applauded the hero who overcame hardship to win. Such an approach fails because it neglects too much that is vital and basic. Warren insists that we cannot understand the Great Commission apart from Jesus Christ Himself in whom the Commission was first enacted.

Another mistaken approach treats the Great Commission as a separable part which can be acted on without reference to all that has gone before or that is to follow. De Ridder devotes more than half of his book to a survey of the Old Testament background and Jewish proselytism as preparation for understanding Jesus and His commission to the disciples. This historical-theological perspective is indispensable.

A third error is to read the text inaccurately. Missionary promoters traditionally stressed "Go ye" whereas the original text centers on "make disciples." The Great Commission, according to De Ridder, focuses the entire missionary action on winning people to be disciples of Jesus Christ. The Great Commission becomes the new covenant God makes with His people. It gives no license for geographical exploration or preoccupation with the exotic elements of strange peoples in faraway places. "Go" is subservient to "make."[3]

Warren begins his study by summarizing what the New Testament says about mission. Next he surveys the course of mission during nearly two millenia since Pentecost. He concludes with a section on the Great Commission in action today. This approach helps highlight the fundamental importance of the Commission in structuring the church's entire existence.

Early in His ministry Jesus dispatched His disciples on missions. Although the Old Testament vision of mission anticipated that through Israel's obedience and example the nations would eventually be drawn to worship Yahweh, the Jewish people in exile started a missionary movement. Even while denouncing Jewish proselytism (Matt. 23:15; cf. Rom. 2:17-24), Jesus did not hesitate to send His disciples out as witnesses. He drew a distinction at the level of substance rather than form.

Each of the four Gospels plus Acts records a version of the Great Commission. In the Gospels it immediately follows the resurrection. The missionary mandate is integrally related to the resurrection for the missionary is to witness to the resurrection. The fact that the Commission appears in each Gospel is already important, but there is more. Each Gospel emphasizes a different aspect of the Great Commission, thus enriching its meaning and enlarging the vision.[4]

The Gospel of Matthew opens with a genealogy which establishes Jesus within the Jewish royal line. John the Baptist prepares for Messiah's coming by calling the people to "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus begins His ministry by announcing that the kingdom is near. Matthew maintains this emphasis on kingdom throughout. When Jesus gives His last command, it is based on the authority of the kingdom. Under this authority the disciples are mandated to go to all the peoples of the world inviting them to enter into covenant with the Messiah. Discipleship is validated only as we "make disciples of all nations." Those within the covenant are responsible to witness to those outside. As people accept the witness, they are to be baptized as a sign that they have also entered into the covenant (i.e., now live under God's rule) and are consecrated to live the life of discipleship. Teaching is the means of growth in discipleship.

Of all the Gospels, Mark depicts most vividly the struggle between the powers of love and evil. When Jesus sent the disciples out the first time, Mark reports that He "gave them authority

over the unclean spirits'' (cf. Matt. 10:1 and Luke 9:1f which give more elaborate forms of the commission—including ''authority over all demons''). The Markan Great Commission emphasizes the authority of liberation. The gospel of Jesus Christ represents to all people release from the bondage of sin and the demonic powers. To live under the reign of God is to live in freedom.

Luke's Gospel, with his eye for human interest, is focused on forgiveness and new relationships. The Lucan Great Commission is based on the authority of forgiveness. The story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) summarizes much that Luke has to say about the basis for this new community of faith. The Great Commission becomes the call to live in a community based on love and forgiveness.

The Gospel of John is unified by an emphasis on the unity of the Son with the Father. In John 17 Jesus indicates that because of the authority of continuity He was commissioning His disciples to go into the world in the same manner as He had been sent. Following the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples and informs them ''As the Father has sent me, even so I send you'' (20:21b). Not only is there a direct link between resurrection and commission; but the disciples are called to travel the same way the Master has trod—the way of suffering and self-sacrifice. The Johannine Great Commission conjoins the highest possible authority with the ultimate service.

A fifth version of the Great Commission appears at the beginning of the Acts. In connection with the Ascension, Jesus assures the disciples they will be specially empowered to carry out their commission. The authority of power characterizes the Acts 1:8 Great Commission.

Matthew most clearly describes the centrality of the kingdom of God. This is what the disciples witness to. The Matthean Great Commission is based on the authority of the kingdom. Mark depicts the decisive struggle between the power of love and evil powers. The Great Commission in Mark's Gospel emphasizes the authority of liberation. Luke's Gospel portrays new relationships and the Great Commission highlights the authority of forgiveness. In John the unity of Father and Son and disciples is stressed and the Great Commission has the authority of continuity. Finally, the Acts form of the Great Commission underscores the authority of power. Kingdom, liberation, new relationships, continuity and power—each is a part of what we call the Great Commission. What does this mean for us today?

1. The Great Commission is God's blueprint for a new order, a new creation. It is not a travel permit for the adventurous. It is Christ's mandate to His church under which it is to witness to the power of the resurrection until the end of time to all peoples throughout the world. The Great Commission is concerned with creating a new history.[5] The Great Commission forms a permanent structure for the life of the church. If the church is faithful to the Great Commission, the disciples will be a people in dispersion, a pilgrim people.

2. The Great Commission is not to be carried out legalistically.[6] The early church did not appeal to the authority of the Great Commission directly because they were living it out. The Holy Spirit energizes and empowers the people of God to be a missionary community.

3. The Great Commission extends the ministry and witness of Jesus Christ. Jesus' style and example are definitive for His disciples. He proclaimed that the reign (kingdom) of God had begun and demonstrated what it meant to live under that reign by rejecting all power except love. He confronted evil but suffered rather than retaliate with violence. The Great Commission can be carried out faithfully only by rejecting all attempts to ally the kingdom of God with a particular nation, race, class or economic-political power. In the confrontation between the kingdom of God and demonic powers, the disciples must take the way of suffering love and sacrifice. For that is the Master's way.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Footnotes

1. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976; Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.
2. J. H. Kok Co., 1971; Baker Book House (reprint), 1975.
3. Karl Barth failed to clarify this point in ''An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28:16-20,'' in Gerald H. Anderson, *The Theology of Christian Mission*, McGraw-Hill, 1961, 63. Cf. De Ridder, *op. cit.*, 174, 180-96.
4. Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church*, McGraw-Hill, 1962, 88, points out these contrasts in the Synoptic Gospels but does not develop them.
5. Cf. Jim Wallis, *Agenda for Biblical People*, Harper and Row, 1976, 23-29, for an exposition of the radical nature of the Great Commission and a critique of Evangelicalism's faulty and superficial understanding. Cf. John Driver, *Community and Commitment*, Herald Press, 1976, Chapter 6.
6. Roland Allen first drew attention to this point in his writings. Harry R. Boer subjected it to systematic examination in *Pentecost and Missions*, Eerdmans and Co., 1961.

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AUTHENTIC WITNESS—A CALL FOR REAPPRAISAL

C. Norman Kraus

The most obvious factors in the world situation remain change and unrest. Such a statement is almost a cliche, but it still remains a basic, dominating fact. Old cultures and patterns are breaking up at an almost unbelievably rapid pace under the onslaughts of industrialization, technology, new communications systems, and the demands of the newly emerging cadres of politically aware and discontent young people. Curfews, barbed wire and soldiers guarding public buildings and airports, student demonstrations, war, and constant turnover of governments across Asia and East Africa—all witness to the profundity of the disturbance.

The changes as they affect the course of missions can be analyzed briefly under three categories. First, there is **nationalization.** The political consequences of this process can be readily traced on the constantly changing map of Asia and Africa—especially Africa at present. All missionaries were asked to leave Burma in the mid-sixties. India has slowly increased her regulation of propagandistic missions from abroad, whether political or religious. Nepal and Bangladesh keep a constant eye on missionaries. In all these countries a new national self-consciousness has created a new climate for missionary work.

If nationalization describes the political process, **liberation** characterizes the psychological and social release from the old political and religious dominations. There is a new self-identity and self-respect; and if not an immediate self-reliance in every case, at least there is much less inclination to tolerate economic exploitation and social discrimination than was formerly the case. This new spirit is reflected in new attitudes of nationals toward "teachers" and administrators from the West. The old obsequity is fast disappearing. For example, one sensitive and honest Asian Christian leader broke with the American mission at great personal risk in order to begin a truly indigenous work saying, "I did not want to be a 'boy' all my life." And the new quiet self-confidence and ability of younger African leaders is truly impressive.

Perhaps not quite so obvious, but just as important, is the changing motivation for accepting Christianity. Becoming a Christian is less and less tied to socio-economic upward mobility. There must be more personally satisfying reasons to become a Christian. Two examples will illustrate what I am referring to. The first is Japan which has achieved the technological standards of the West without adopting Christianity. And the second is the Independent Churches of Africa who are adopting a satisfying indigenous expression of Christianity without adopting Western civilization.

Along with this new independence, we have seen the emergence of a more self-confident, aggressive posture by various national religions. In the Philippines the Ecclesia ni Christo is a homegrown nationalistic (perhaps bastardized) variety of Christianity which is neither Catholic nor Protestant that has built an extensive and impressive religious organization. In Japan the lay renewal movements within Buddhism have had a phenomenal appeal. Hinduism not only is more aggressive in India, it has itself become a missionary religion. Also in India there are stirrings of renewal among the Muslim community, and Islam of an aggressive fundamentalist variety is being exported from Pakistan and Kuwait.

The third aspect of change is **secularization**—the shift from sacral (religious) cultures and governments to a recognized separation of political life from the traditional national religion. The effects upon culture are profound. It hastens the disintegration of traditional social patterns—customs and morals. The old forces for social cohesion and order, the patterns of social relationship such as the extended family, and economic classes are fluid and in transition. Pluralism is the new shape of technologically dominated cultures.

One example must suffice to represent this phenomenon. Forty years ago Kagawa correctly described Japan as one of the most religious nations on earth. Today it is a secular technocracy—probably one of the least religious in terms of outward religious forms and continuity of a religious tradition.

Implications for Missions

Such social and political revolution inevitably brings with it changes in missionary strategy and goals. Old methods no longer seem effective. The changing structure of relationships and responsibilities within national churches leave missionaries uncertain of their roles. The missionary's self-understanding has become much less clear. Is s/he evangelist? teacher? fraternal worker? pastor? The uncertainty reaches crisis proportions in some cases.

The official responses of sending agencies to this revolution range from stubborn standpattism to calls for the secularization of the mission. At the one end of the continuum are those who view these developments as demonic and call for increasing the effort and money to undergird the old strategies. At the opposite end of the continuum there are those who advocate the politicization of the church in the service of rightful demands of developing nations for liberation from exploitation and a fair share of the earth's resources.

And to complicate all this, the grass-roots supporting constituency's conception of the missionary role and its expectations of "results" from contributed missionary dollars have not kept pace with changes on the field. This causes real tension for both missionaries and home boards who are generally much nearer to the situation on the field and must interpret it to the supporting constituency at the same time they appeal for funds. Such rapid and profound change is accompanied inevitably by confusion, unclarity, and uneasiness. One senses among missionaries and boards an ambiguity of purpose and a loss of focus on central goals—and little wonder. To say the least this is hardly a time for slogans that gather up purposes into overly simple, ringing statements to stir us to action. The situation is understandably unnerving and drains much emotional energy on the field.

We need to give priority to reevaluation of goals and strategy. But how does one give priority to such long-range considerations when ten things in a wildly fluctuating situation are clamoring for attention, and when the supporting constituency threatens to reduce funds unless old methods and goals are not prosecuted with greater vigor? We of course cannot begin **de novo.** Our job is to shift from one institutionalized strategy and set of goal expectations to another. We must **un**-do as well as **re**-do—a task that is more than doubly difficult.

Perhaps we have no choice. Or do we subscribe to the old philosophy that somehow the human race will muddle through, and the church will come tagging on behind? Frankly, I am not ready to settle for that. The church may have turned into a taillight rather than a headlight, as Ralph Abernathy lamented in 1964 in the midst of the civil rights movements, but I cannot simply accommodate to that. And if it is true that we should be headlights, I see no alternative to putting some priority on long-range, careful rethinking of goals. That means theology as well as pragmatic strategy. We need serious theological work to inform and undergird strategy.

Three Stages

It has been pointed out that in the development of missions we move through **dependency** and **independency** to **interdependency.** This analogy from human growth helps us understand the historical development of the missionary enterprise as well as the maturation process of any given mission project.

In the first stage the model for mission was one of Christian civilization seeking to enlighten the primitive heathen—teacher to pupil, rich(er) to poor, wise to ignorant. The "heathen" were thought of as children who were dependent upon fathers. It was assumed that they could not be entrusted with the mission of the church until they had mastered Western civilization. The expatriate missionary was initiator, overseer, policy maker, pioneer evangelist, medical doctor, etc. The national Christian was deacon, lay evangelist, etc. An **institution of dependency** upon a continuing supply of missionaries, message, and supplies from the West was created.

Then came the modern movements for national political independence from the colonial regimes under whose umbrella missions had begun and which to a certain extent they had taken as a model. It was not long until the ideal of political independence began to be felt in the churches. National churchmen also wanted an independent religious movement under their own discretion and control. The big word in missions at this stage was **indigenization**—creation of national churches independent from the mission in organization and finances. More recently from

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Litho in USA

the side of the nationals has come the call for a "moratorium" on missionaries (but not funds), so that the indigenous churches may become truly independent.

Now we have begun to enter the third stage of interdependency in which the watchwords are **partnership** and **brotherhood.** World mission is conceived as the work of the worldwide church, and there must be genuine cooperation between the older and younger churches.

My concern is not to discuss these stages further, but to use them as three models for a comparison of goals and strategies involved. I believe that interdependence is the proper relationship between expatriate and national in the world mission of the church. Thus a comparison, again schematic, is for the purpose of helping us analyze more clearly our goals for the future, not for criticizing all that has gone before.

Goals and Strategies

In the first stage or model the goal was **telling.** The emphasis was upon a verbal message. Whatever else he might have been, the "missionary" was "evangelist." The message was a Western import, and the strategy aimed to make converts to Christianity.

In the second stage/model the goal was "**servanthood.**" Institutions were turned over to the national churches as much as possible, and organized "leadership" was transferred to local hands. While the model of servanthood was good, it was difficult for missionaries not to develop a "helper-helpee" relationship in which the "helper"-servant defined the need and prescribed the solution. Furthermore, especially in ecumenical circles, service began to be defined as service to the world—the church as servant helping underdeveloped nations gain liberation.

Now, both evangelism and service are excellent, but we are coming to see that they need a context of interdependence and partnership if they are to be in a Christlike pattern. The new emphasis, so it seems to me, needs to be **embodiment in a community of salvation.** Interdependence requires a new theological stance and a new strategy—a strategy of identification with, or if you please, incarnation. And does not incarnation bring us back to the center of the gospel?

While it may seem obvious on the surface that this emphasis on incarnation is theologically correct, as a matter of fact it has not been obvious. Many missionaries who went out as evangelists to save people from sin and hell did not think of incarnation as the center of the gospel. They would have held crucifixion as sacrifice for sin to be central. If this is considered a theological subtlety, I must insist that it is one which has made a significant difference in the way missions have been carried out. The shift in third century Roman theology—which put more and more emphasis upon sin, guilt, and juridical models for dealing with sin—brought with it a whole pattern of theology and mission. This pattern, which was inherited by the Protestant reformers, leads to a different strategy than a theology of incarnation might indicate.

In a theology of incarnation we also deal with sin and reconciliation; but we do it, not by preaching a juridical transaction accomplished on the cross, but by taking up the cross and following Christ in discipleship and witness. As Canon Fairbairn put it, we incarnate Christ as He incarnated God, i.e., we are His embodiment or "body." The church is to be a community of forgiveness through whom the healing love and grace of Christ continues to be offered to the world—not in institution and sacrament, but through fellowship in Christ's suffering.

During the last 150 years of Protestant missions, most evangelical missionaries assumed on theological grounds that it would be a sin to identify with, to "incarnate" in the "non-Christian cultures" to which they went. They viewed these cultures as antagonistic and not just neutral. They thought of them not only as non-Christian but anti-Christian because they incorporated and reflected "heathen" religions. This attitude is far from dead on mission fields.

An emphasis on incarnation indicates a theological attitude which has significant implications for the psychological approach to missions. While I do not profess to know all the implications, I am convinced that this is a fundamental watershed and that the Apostle Paul's incarnational approach remains valid. Paul's greatness lay in the fact that through personal embodiment and message he was able to present a Jewish Jesus, the Messiah, as a live option for Graeco-Roman culture.

Western missions have by and large taken the position that the way to spread Christianity was to multiply duplicates of themselves. "Church planting" was a transplanting of what Van Leeuwen has called "duplicate churches." The whole style of missions was to induce the convert to embody the missionary's culture, not vice versa.

Authentic Witness

Some will take exception to my term "identify with," but I have not found a better way to express the necessary attitude and approach. Let me explain what such an approach entails.

First, to identify with does not mean to imitate. Imitation is not authentic identification. Neither does it necessarily imply an exact adopting of cultural roles—"getting inside" the culture. Speaking from the perspective of anthropology or sociology the missionary may identify as an "outsider."

To identify with means, in the first instance, **to listen** to and **learn** from the adopted culture. It means to learn that culture so well that one as an outsider might understand it better than insiders. Of course, knowing a culture this way

is still a secondhand experience so I must add that identifying with means further that one tries to **feel with** the adopted culture. This is extremely difficult, and one must simply do the best he can. A genuine caring attitude covers a multitude of sins in this area.

In Addis Ababa I talked to a young couple who were studying the language for one year before being sent out to do development work. We began talking about the problem of identifying with the culture, and I said to him reverently, "For God's sake do not do anything on the field for the first year." Having had some previous experience, he agreed with me, but he asked, "What am I going to write back home during that year?" I suggest that we should not expect missionaries to "do anything" for five years. Of course they would be doing something. Probably they would be doing the most effective thing possible. They would be relating and listening. They would be getting into a position where someone would hear and understand what they were saying.

Jesus, the Christ, who is our model for this kind of activity,took 30 years to become incarnated for His mission of two and a half years! The very suggestion sounds preposterous, does it not? But at the least, it strongly suggests the relative allotment of time and effort that ought to be given to identifying with others. In my judgment we have seriously erred in this regard. We have expected people to start producing reports almost immediately when they get to the field.

In the second place, to identify with means **to respect** the adopted culture, to give it the best interpretation possible, not the worst. In too many cases we have used "heathen culture" as a foil or straw man. Unless we have a message that is better than the very best that they have already, there is not much reason for us to have gone in the first place.

I do not mean to suggest that one should be totally uncritical of an adopted culture any more than he should of his native culture, but this is a delicate point. Perhaps we can indicate the proper direction by saying that one should not criticize the adopted culture until the criticism is genuinely felt as self-criticism. Of course Christ stands above every culture as both savior and judge, but in both roles He comes as the incarnate one.

In the third place, identification with implies a dialogical stance. Many evangelicals are afraid of the word dialogue because they assume it implies that the truth of the gospel may be compromised. But dialogue does not demand compromise of truth. It does imply that we may not be omniscient, that there may be different ways of looking at something, that insights from the adopted culture may also throw light on the subject being discussed.

Dialogue is crucial to good communication across cultures. In all too many cases we have assumed the overwhelming superiority of our own world view, social institutions, and moral practices. We have assumed that the message of Christ could only be expressed through the thought patterns of Western culture. Thus, we have harangued and demanded conversion to the Western system rather than taking the time to consider respectfully and understand the other culture's perspective, values, and possibilities as a carrier of the gospel message.

Fourth, and perhaps most important in the attitude of identification, is the willingness to forsake our power base as visitors from a superior technological civilization. Not only have we remained independent of the cultures and people to whom we attempted to witness, we have taken advantage of that power to maintain an otherwise impossible distance and elite living standard. **But most serious of all, we have presented an ideal of individual independence and invulnerability as an advantage offered by the gospel.** We have offered the "wonders" of industrial civilization as fruits of conversion. This is the opposite of incarnation and interdependence. Read Philippians 2:5-11 again.

Instead of allowing our weakness to become the matrix of God's strength, we have insisted on our own strength and it has proved dysfunctional—a stumbling block and offense to the gospel.

In the strategy of incarnation, then, we must first identify with the people to whom we witness. A second implicit aspect of the strategy needs now to be made explicit. In order for there to be a new embodiment of the gospel, we will consciously have to dissociate the Christ from Western Christianity and the gospel from the Western theological synthesis. If we are going to work seriously at this new model, we must truly **cross** cultures.

There is good precedent for this in the New Testament itself. This process is precisely what is reflected in the letters of the Apostle Paul. The first theological matrix for the gospel was rabbinic Judaism. Its theological categories came from the Hebrew prophets, i.e., Messiah, kingdom of God, Sabbath, salvation as a national event. Its moral practice was defined in terms of the traditional classifications of "clean and unclean," i.e., holy and unholy. The New Testament as a Greek document represents a **translation** from Judaism to Hellenism. Paul, John, and even Peter to some extent, not to speak of Luke and Mark, clearly reflect a theological dissociation with Judaistic terminology and rabbinic theological categories. I hasten to add, however, not a discontinuity of message. Undoubtedly, the power and appeal of an Apollos lay in his Hellenistic style and ability to communicate, but he needed deeper understanding of the essential message.

The Apostolic Stance

In a real sense we must again take the apostolic stance in witness. This would mean at least two things: (a) to take

a first generation, pre-theological and pre-institutional stance. Like the apostolic witnesses we must begin at the beginning and ask what Jesus means for the people to whom He is proclaimed , and (b) to exercise prophetic discernment under the auspices of the Holy Spirit in applying the gospel to another culture. An apostle was one who had both a direct experience with Jesus Christ and a fundamental theological understanding of the implications of Christ for human need which gave him the ability to discern the will of God for the new church. Thus what the apostle said was authentic, even though it was not a repetition of what Jesus said or even what Jewish Christian theology was saying.

Some of the adaptations that Paul made caused a great deal of tension in the church and nearly resulted in his excommunication from Jewish Christian circles. That tension is the measure of the distance that he had moved beyond the Judaistic concepts of James and Peter. But what Paul said to the Greeks and Romans had such authenticity that it makes up the greater part of our New Testament. All this despite the fact that Paul was not an associate of Jesus, and that his gospel already represents at least one step beyond the original Jewish cultural setting in which Jesus Himself came as the Messiah.

We are probably in a better position today than at any time since the first century to understand Jesus in His own historical Judean context as distinct from our own. Thus we are in a better position to make the distinctions necessary to dissociate Him from the Graeco-European-Hebrew synthesis which is our "orthodoxy."

As recent as 150 years ago, most Bible scholars read the Bible as though it were written in and to their own century. They did not first ask the question, "What did this mean in the first century context as the writer addressed the Galatian or Corinthian Christians?" We have not even conceived that question clearly until recent times because we did not have the historical and linguistic self-consciousness to do it. Such self-consciousness is very modern. Witness the artists of Holland and Italy in the 14th-17th centuries who painted biblical scenes as though the settings and costumes were those of their own time and place.

Today this historical self-consciousness along with wide cross-cultural travel has given us the perceptions necessary to stand outside our own immediate culture and to relate the Jesus Christ of the New Testament more directly to the cultures in which we are witnessing.

All this is not to fault Western Christians for working out a synthesis—a theology—for themselves. The only point is that we should not **impose our synthesis** on other cultures as **their orthodoxy.** We must let Jesus Christ be normative for them. We must let the Holy Spirit guide them in forming their theology in dialogue with the Bible. The goal is that our statement of the gospel should be the catalyst which induces the process among them. This is the ideal. It is complex and difficult, but I am persuaded that it is possible. We must let the gospel speak to their questions.

Let me illustrate. In Calcutta at Sunday dinner with a missionary publishing agent, our conversation turned to Union Biblical Seminary, Yeotmal. He reported that some missionaries were unhappy with Yeotmal because it was "too liberal." When I asked what they meant by "liberal," he said that there was some complaint that the graduates of the seminary did not know whether they were Calvinist or Arminian in their theology. The clear assumption was that Indian theological students must know the terminology and categories of a seventeenth century European theological debate in order to be properly prepared to preach the gospel in India.

Or again, in Ethiopia I found vigorous, committed young evangelists arguing about the meaning of the Genesis accounts of creation in rationalistic, modern Western thought forms and assumptions when their own culture provides a much better basis to understand the language and linguistic form of the Genesis stories than does our scientific culture.

In Tanzania and Kenya, where the significance of community as the very matrix of the individual's life and identity are intuitively understood because it is the cultural tradition of the family, we have preached the gospel in individualistic terms of Western Pietism. After several sessions of a seminar in which I was attempting to explain the biblical concept of salvation in community to the obvious uneasiness of missionaries, a young Luo pastor expressed his appreciation to me and said, "We understand what you are talking about."

In the Bihari mountains of India a missionary told me that he had difficulty arousing much concern among the aboriginal people for their **sins**; but, he said, "They are extremely concerned about demons!" I replied that I hoped that he had cast out a few. The gospel speaks to that problem also. In fact, there are more instances of Jesus casting out demons than of forgiving sins in the accounts of His ministry.

In order to do this, we will need the gift of prophetic discernment. There has never been a time in the history of the church when the Spirit of prophecy was more urgently needed. Especially in situations of cultural change, whether in social revolution or in transcultural communication, prophetic discernment is essential to authentic witness.

This brings us back to the centrality of the church as the community of prophetic discernment. The prophet speaks from within a community of the Spirit which tests and authenticates his message. He does not come as a lone individual speaking to strangers. Thus the church as the **koinonia of the Spirit** remains the focus of Christian

concern. It is not the individual Christian who is the embodiment of Christ but the church of which the individual is a "member." Our concern for individuals is that they be brought into the new fellowship of salvation.

Training for Mission

If this is the nature of the task, what kind of missionaries will we need for the future? How should we go about training them? Again, we can only sketch the broad outline. First, they will need to be highly skilled specialists at communicating across cultures. This would suggest a new level of cultural sophistication—anthropological insight, language ability, etc. The new missionary will need to play a different role than the old father-evangelist figure.

Second, they will need a grasp of the gospel and a kind of theological insight into the meaning of the faith that gives them maximum freedom under the Spirit to adapt and to work out its implications in differing cultures.

All this suggests that the new missionary will need to be long-term. The picture of an integrated, interdependent worldwide brotherhood suggests the need for more than short-term technical experts to help raise the level of development in "underdeveloped" countries. It suggests to me more than simply turning over the enterprise to nationals who then run an independent project while short-term volunteers return to the joys of the American way of life. It suggests rather continuing interaction, a mutually shared task, mutual leadership, two-way translation and influence. (The early Jewish contingent of Christianity died out because it refused such interaction and mutual interdependence with Hellenistic Christianity.)

This does not rule out the contribution of short-term technical experts in brotherly interchange. But it indicates that they will not carry the major share of the continuing task. They will make the best contribution if they can fit into long-term programs under the supervision of ongoing interdependent leadership—national and expatriate.

Such a reappraisal raises the question of preparation and training for such a role, but that is a new subject which deserves attention in its own right.

While on leave from Goshen College 1974-75, C. Norman and Ruth Kraus were on a teaching mission in Asia and East Africa. This essay summarizes observations they made during that assignment. Kraus is author of ***Dispensationalism in America, The Healing Christ,*** *and* ***Community of the Spirit.*** *Another manuscript is in process.*

THE MISSIONS TO NATIVE AMERICANS

R. Pierce Beaver

Protestant missions to the American Indians through 300 of the 350 years of their existence were carried out in a partnership of church and state absolutely contrary to present ideas about a wall of separation. The very colonial charters, such as those of Virginia and Massachusetts, professed that the evangelization of the Indians was the chief purpose of colonization both on part of the King and the companies. The word civilize was coupled with the term evangelize.

The Seventeenth Century

The colonists waited until they thought themselves to be militarily strong enough to withstand any attack by the Indians. The beginning in Virginia was snuffed out by the reaction to the Indian Uprising or "Massacre" of 1622, and only some educational work was done after that. Thomas Mayhew, Jr., son of the proprietor of Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket, and the Elizabeth Islands and newly ordained pastor of the church at Edgartown on the Vineyard, who knew the Massachusetts language, began quiet personal evangelism among the Indians in 1662 and initiated public preaching in 1664. The Mayhews did not interfere with the social and political structure of the Indians, and converts came rapidly. The Christians entered into a convenant in 1652, but the church was not organized until 1670. The evangelist, Hiacoomes, was ordained pastor at that time. Meanwhile Thomas, Jr., had been lost at sea, and his father assumed the missionary office. Six successive generations of the family engaged in the ministry to the Indians.

The more renowned John Eliot, pastor at Roxbury west of Boston, began public services in 1664, and enlisted other ministers of Massachusetts and Plymouth in the mission. Four thousand Christians were gathered into 14 towns of "Praying Indians" in 1674. They were devastated by both Indians and whites in King Philip's War in 1675-76. Thereafter the Indians in Eastern Massachusetts declined, but a tiny remnant of that early Christian community still exists.

Here is the origin of the whole Protestant world mission, and it has been continuous ever since Mayhew and Eliot. The activities of the chaplains of the Dutch East Indies Company had little influence compared with the Indian missions in arousing British, American, and European Protestants to missionary obedience. Inspiration, motivation, aims and goals, and patterns of action all were passed on to the overseas missions when they developed.

The Eighteenth Century

The second wave of Puritan missions began with the mission to the Mohegans of the Housatonic Valley in western Massachusetts by John Sergeant, a tutor at Yale College, in 1734. The town of Stockbridge was given them, and the converts were soon recognized as the Stockbridge nation. Sergeant's productive ministry was cut short by death in 1749. He was succeeded by the famous theologian, Jonathan Edwards, until 1758. Under the next pastor, Stephen West, the church was divided into Indian and white congregations, John Sergeant, Jr. becoming pastor of the Indians. Their position was very uncomfortable after the Revolution, and the Stockbridges moved west by stages to the neighborhood of Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Simultaneously with Sergeant's mission and closely associated with him was David Brainerd, Connecticut man commissioned by the Scottish Society in 1742, who worked near Albany, transferred to Easton, Pennsylvania, and then itinerated on the Susquehanna. Then in 1745 through a mighty working of the Holy Spirit, he gathered a community at Cranbury, New Jersey. He died of tuberculosis two years later.

It was in this same period that the Unitas Fratrum or Moravian Church sent a band from Herrnhut in Saxony under Christian Heinrich Rauch, locating at Shekomeko, Wedquadnach (now Indian Pond), and Scaticook on the New York-Connecticut border. Connecticut militia expelled the Moravian missionaries, and the settlers on the New York side forced the abandonment of the mission there. Some Mohegan converts remained at Scaticook, and others joined a community of Moravian Delawares near the Wind Gap in Pennsylvania. These Christians, after amost being slain by a mob in Philadelphia, were forced across the colony in stages, until John Heckwelder and David Zeisberger led them into the Muskingum country of eastern Ohio. There the mission flourished until on March 8, 1782 the 90 Christians of Gnadenhutten were brutally murdered by a company of American militia. The people of the other villages fled, and after many temporary settlements finally located at Fairfield, Ontario.

There were efforts to penetrate the Iroquois country of New York from New England. The largest and most creative scheme was that of Eleazer Wheelock. Wheelock, while pastor at Lebanon Crank, Connecticut, in 1743 took into his home the Mohegan youth, Samson Occum, and taught him for four years. This gave Wheelock the idea of training Indian and English students together so that they might learn from each other, then sending them forth as missionaries. He established Moor's Charity School for this purpose, teaching both boys and girls. Occum went to Great Britain to raise money for Wheelock's enterprise. He was lionized. Occum was ordained and spent his life as missionary to the Mohegans, Niantics, and Montauks. The white pastors seemed always to expect far higher standards and achievement of Occum than of themselves. Wheelock was unable to work well with others, and he was often at odds with his missionaries. His most famous white agent, Samuel Kirkland separated from him. After Moor's School Kirkland finished his education at the College of New Jersey (Princeton) and became a missionary to the Oneidas, one of the Iroquois nations.

The one mass movement during the colonial era was the conversion of the Mohawks of Central New York and their entrance into the Church of England. The mission was initiated through the efforts of two royal governors of New York, sponsored and subsidized by Queen Anne, and taken under the direction of the New Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The first missionary was Thoroughgood Moore, who arrived at Albany in 1704; but the first full-time missionary was John Stuart, who came just as the Revolution began and was interned for the duration. The movement was not due to the efforts of missionaries, but to the influence of the paramount war chief, Joseph Brant, and Sir William Johnson, superintendent of Indian Affairs. They did not disturb the Mohawk culture. The Mohawks were loyal to Great Britain during the war, and at its end they moved to Ontario.

Missionary Notives. The foremost motive was **gloria Dei** (glory of God), for the Puritans aimed at furthering the kingdom of Christ in the western part of the earth and making the desert blossom as the rose, thus contributing to God's design for the consummation of history in the Eschaton.

The second grand motive was compassion: first for the perishing souls of the poor heathen and second for their wretched physical and social condition. This led the missionaries and their supporters to unite inseparably "evangelization" and "civilization," and their followers down into the twentieth century agreed with them. On the one hand, the Indians were regarded as men created by God in His image, possessed of reasoning minds, and capable of understanding and responding to the gospel. They could be saved by faith in Christ. On the other hand, they were regarded as "the ruines of mankind," utterly depraved, without civilization, living in barbarism, slaves

of the devil. No value of any kind was seen in Indian culture. The Puritan Christian man was the model disciple of Christ and the standard of civilized humanity. The Indian was to be made over into his image. Progress in growth in his likeness would indicate the stage of growth on the path of salvation.

The only people who disagreed with this understanding of mission aims were Joseph Brant, Sir William Johnson, and the Rev. Charles Chauncy, pastor of the Second Church in Boston. Brant and Johnson held that the anglicized converts of the New Englanders were gloomy and unfitted for the hunting life of the forests. They believed that the red man could be a Christian and still remain an Indian. That was also the view of Chauncy, who said that it was wrong to try to make an Englishman of the Indian, and that this was the primary cause of the decrease of the race in New England. Let the Indian accept the gospel, and in time the gospel will effect any changes that are really necessary. These three voices could not persuade the majority. During three and a half centuries the missionaries tried to make a red WASP out of the Indian.

Missionary Methods were determined by the general objective. Evangelism was primarily by preaching. Converts were baptized and gathered into churches. They were nurtured by catechizing, teaching, pastoral care, and discipline. Education stressed farming, domestic crafts, and religion. Both English and the vernacular language were used. Eliot produced a whole "library" and the entire Bible (1664) in the Massachusetts language. Some Indians were put into the Boston Latin Grammar School. John Sergeant introduced the boarding school, which would become in Indian and world missions the favorite means of weaning converts from their native cultures. The great achievement was the raising up of a native ministry. There were 37 ordained pastors in 1700. In order to further the grand design the Indians were gathered into separate towns in Massachusetts. This was to protect them from bad Indians and bad whites and to make their nurture easier. The Moravians, too, gathered converts into villages, where liturgical piety was attractive to them. The General Court of Massachusetts gave land for the towns and built the church and school. Four English families were introduced into Stockbridge to afford an example for the Indians, and that proved to be disastrous.

The Nineteenth Century

Missions declined to a low ebb during the Revolution. They were cut off from British support, and little came out of New England. Congress subsidized some of the missionaries, especially Samuel Kirkland. Yet zeal for mission was developing, and immediately after the end of the struggle there was a great explosion of organization. Beginning in 1787, a score of missionary societies were created. They aimed at the Indians, the settlers on the frontier, and the heathen overseas. It required a student movement to bring a foreign mission board—the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions—into being in 1810. The Baptist Board and the United Foreign Missionary Society followed in 1814 and 1817. Gradually others were founded. They all took responsibility for missions to the Indians. Little was achieved, however, until Cyrus Kingsbury established the American Board's mission to the Cherokees in 1816.

It was government action which stimulated the expansion of missions during the nineteenth century in a partnership with the churches which lasted until 1899. Indian Affairs were placed under the Secretary of War. The first Secretary, Henry Knox, told President Washington that there was only one alternative for the Indian: He could either be exterminated or civilized! A great step could be taken towards the latter if missionaries, who alone had the disinterested welfare of the red man at heart, were subsidized to manage agricultural and mechanical schools. But when he prohibited evangelization of non-Christians, the mission societies lost interest in the proposal.

The Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury stopped in Washington to talk with President Madison and Secretary Calhoun about his new mission, and both men enthusiastically supported the scheme. They ordered the government agent with the Cherokees to provide buildings and equipment. Brainerd Station was opened in 1817 and seven other major centers soon followed. The Cherokees had already decided on assimilation. With mission help they made great progress. They so far accommodated to Southern white society that they held slaves. The nation became literate, and the ABCFM turned over the mission's press to it. A constitution patterned after that of the United States was adopted. Despite the leadership of the American Board, the Indians adapted to the Southern style of Christian life rather than that of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists of the American Board mission. They became largely Baptists and Methodists and loved the camp meeting. Soon the War Department declared the Cherokees to be a Christian nation. They completely fulfilled the expectations of church and government with regard to assimilation. Meanwhile Kingsbury had long since moved on to the Choctaws, and the same course of events reoccurred there.

President Madison in his 1817 annual message asked Congress to set up a Civilization Fund, and the appropriation of $10,000 was made in 1818. Government provided two-thirds the cost of buildings. Meager as the sum was, the mission boards hastened to apply. Evangelism kept pace with education. Soon the participating mission bodies were investing 13 times the amount

given by government, and certain tribes made gifts from their funds. Thirty-eight schools were being operated by 11 mission boards or societies in 1826 in several parts of the country. The Southern Indians made such great progress that the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were called The Five Civilized Tribes.

However, what was achieved under and through the Civilization Fund was destroyed by the government's removal policy. Ruthless pressure was exerted to induce or force the tribes located east of the Mississippi to move to the west of that river, especially into Kansas and Indian territory. Most missionaries and their boards favored removal. They saw the tribes decimated and the churches destroyed through white aggression and exploitation. They deluded themselves with their baseless self-assurance that west of the great river and especially in Indian Territory the Indians would be forever beyond reach of the white men (other than missionaries!). James B. Finley, missionary to the Wyandots at Upper Sandusky, Ohio, is an excellent example of a pastor who tried to protect his flock from removal and who tried to publicize its terrors. Isaac McCoy was, on the contrary, the most vigorous and influential advocate of removal. After Finley's transfer the Wyandots were moved by stages, and the last group lost 100 of their number within the first year. McCoy lobbied with the Congress, the President, the Secretary of War, the General Baptist Convention and its Board of Foreign Missions, and every person who might aid the cause of removal. The missionary on several occasions served the government as agent or surveyor. He induced the Convention to endorse removal. Another influential proponent of removal was the noted minister and geographer, a leader in the American Board, Dr. Jedidiah Morse.

Even the American Board for a time approved of removal because of Dr. Morse's advocacy. But when put to the test the Board became the strongest defender of Indian rights. President Monroe first set forth the removal policy in 1825, and Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Bill was passed by Congress in 1830. It was aimed principally at the Five Civilized Tribes. Georgia in 1829 incorporated all Cherokee lands into counties of the state and declared that Cherokee laws were void. Jackson announced that he would not enforce Federal laws and treaties where they conflicted with the claims of Georgia. The American Board designed and supported the suit of the Cherokee nation against Georgia in the Supreme Court, but the Court denied that it had jurisdiction since the Cherokees formed a foreign nation. When two of the missionaries were sentenced to imprisonment at hard labor, the Board then brought suit on their behalf, that being another way to get at the basic question of Georgia's violation of Indian rights. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the missionaries and stated that the Cherokees were a nation under protection of the United States and free of the jurisdiction of Georgia. But President Jackson ignored the ruling and ordered the Army to remove the Indians. Segregation replaced assimilation.

When the tribes had been removed across the Mississippi, then there followed the forced location of the Western peoples on reservations. The buffalo were destroyed. The Indians had to exist on inferior rations and supplies doled out by the government.

President Grant's Peace Policy provided the second impetus to missionary expansion in the century. The Indian Bureau was thoroughly corrupted by political patronage, and an agent hired at $1,500 a year could retire with a fortune after three years. A Peace Commission appointed by Congress recommended that the service be placed under a board of unpaid philanthropists. The Board of Indian Commissioners was appointed, but it was given no power of administration and could only inspect, audit, and advise. It was called a "Church Board," but churches had no voice in selection. The members were eminent Christian laymen. They did bring an improvement in the lot of the Indians through their watchfulness. Discovering that they possessed no power, the members resigned. Their successors had even less influence. Grant's major move was to fire the agents and to ask the mission boards of mainline churches both to nominate and supervise the agents on the reservations. They were expected to establish schools and churches. They did. The number of missionaries rose from 15 in 1869 to 74 in 1873, schools from 10 to 69, teachers from 17 to 86, and pupils from 594 to 2,690. There were 90 churches. The churches on the whole provided good agents, but politicians often prevented their confirmation, "framed them" and ousted them from office, and even appointed rascals without reference to the mission boards and called them church appointees. H. M. Teller, Secretary of the Interior under President Arthur, terminated the system.

Government support of the schools continued. The Rev. General Thomas J. Morgan put an end to that through his activities as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Secretary of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, and chief spokesman for the nativist American Protective Association. He charged that the Roman Catholics were taking over the Indian schools as the first step in taking control of the public schools of the nation. He brought such great pressure to bear that one after another the mission boards renounced government subsidies and the national judicatories of the churches passed resolutions calling for the most strict separation of church and state. The last government grant to mission schools was made in 1899, and the three centuries long partnership came to an end.

Only the church having supervision of a reservation was supposed to have missions on that reservation unless

some church was already operating there. Reservations were declared open to all churches in 1881. That allowed for a great increase of missions, which actually developed after 1900.

The Twentieth Century

The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the missions continued in accord except while John Collier was Commissioner under President Frankin D. Roosevelt. The mission boards considered him to be a foe of all that they had striven for—Christianization and assimilation. There was no further stimulation of missions by the government. Expansion by mainline churches in the Southwest was mainly due to pressure by tourists who saw the Indians there. Slowly smaller conservative churches began missions and at length some Evangelical non-denominational societies also. In 1921 there were 26 mission agencies at work. These increased to 36 by 1950. There are more today, plus many independent Pentecostal congregations led by men with charismatic gifts. The Protestant constituency in 1950 was 140,000. At present the author of this article is making a survey but cannot yet estimate the present membership. Roman Catholic Indians are said to number 155,600. There is a crisis in ministry and youth are being lost. An apparently successful program of Theological Education by Extension, in which Cook Christian Training School in Tempe, Arizona, is the pioneer, gives great promise. There is a new Native American Theological Association sponsored by United Presbyterian and United Church of Christ institutions. A.I.M. and other Indian activist organizations are putting pressure on the churches. Although there is still strong complaint that denominational structures hold the Indians in the stifling embrace of a paternalistic hand, some measure of self-determination is beginning to be allowed. The United Presbyterian Church, for example, has a Native American Consultative Committee, and the Episcopal Church has created the Navajo Missionary District, which will eventually have its own Navajo bishop.

A burning issue at present is the recognition of God-given values in Indian culture and the use of the religio-cultural heritage in Christian life, worship, and ministry. What is a truly indigenous church today? Having been transferred from the foreign mission boards to the home mission boards, the Indians did not participate in the great drive for indigenization and independence which characterized world mission thinking and action from about 1920 to the present. Now they are trying to find their way to renewal and to credibility with their people. Even more difficult than solutions to reservation problems is the discovery of what it means to be Indian in the industrial city and how the church may minister to the many thousands who now live there cut off from roots in the reservation communities.

As dean of American historians of Christian missions, R. Pierce Beaver has contributed to many aspects of missionary historiography. One of his major interests has been missions to the North American Indians. In 1971 he retired from the University of Chicago Divinity School where he had been Professor of Missions and Chairman of the Church History Field. Earlier he was director of the Missionary Research Library and a missionary in China.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: CHURCH GROWTH DEBATE

Within the past 25 years, the study of church growth processes has emerged as an important activity in its own right. But what has come to be called the Church Growth Movement is more than a scholarly pursuit. Its proponents are activists who use a particular methodology to furnish information for "bold new plans" of Christian expansion.

The Church Growth Movement, of which Donald McGavran is chief founder and major theoretician, is increasingly identified with conservative Protestant mission agencies. As such, it represents the only major contribution conservative Protestants have made to missionary theory and method in this century. The fact that Church Growth has become the subject of increasingly sharp debate should surprise no one. Church Growth advocates have been aggressive and, in some cases, vigorously polemical. Certain missionary statesmen, who remain unconvinced of the McGavran system, nevertheless credit the movement with having given the missions stew a needed stirring.

Sooner or later someone was sure to say, as Robert K. Hudnut has, that *Church Growth Is Not the Point* (Harper and Row, 1975). Even more surely a church growth advocate would rebut this assertion. C. Peter Wagner answers Hudnut in *Your Church Can Grow* (Regal, 1976). Both Hudnut and Wagner write with the American church scene in mind.

A couple of preliminary points need to be made. Hudnut betrays no firsthand acquaintance with the Church Growth Movement. He neither cites that literature nor attacks the theories. Hudnut's basic concern is with a popular Christianity which takes pleasure in favorable statistics and expensive church plants but exhibits no spiritual power. The path to church renewal, according to Hudnut, is fresh encounter with God, elimination of nominal members from church rolls, and development of new seriousness and purpose.

With his usual zest for debate, Wagner disposes of Hudnut and his "passive" thinking by offering a different recipe: seven vital signs of a healthy church. The growing church has a "possibility thinker" pastor; mobilized laity geared to growth: a group large enough to offer a range of services; balance between worship, fellowship, and small group experience; members drawn from one economic/social class; and a biblical order of priorities.

Are these the only alternatives available? Must we accept this polarization and settle for one or the other? One can only agree with Hudnut that the church is called to be faithful. When Wagner derides a "remnant theology," he is deriding a major theme of holy history. The church is called to be a suffering, witnessing community that does not count the cost. Suffering and witnessing do not, however, argue against growth. Fresh evidence from today's experience affirms that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."

One agrees with Wagner's contention that the body of Christ is a living, dynamic organism actively seeking to incorporate new members. Howard Snyder expressed the concern of many sympathizers of Church Growth when he cited two fundamental flaws: unbridled pragmatism and a superficial scriptural foundation (*Eternity*, November 1976, 62). Wagner characterizes Dean Kelley's book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (Harper and Row, 1972), as perhaps the most important church growth book for the American church. Kelley's analysis showed that in the sixties it was the conservative churches which grew. They have kept evangelism as top priority, espoused conservative politics, and kept ethical issues out of the church. It is quite possible that Kelley overlooked the real explanation. Conservative Protestantism may be the new folk religion which maintains the closest possible relationship between church and culture. The old Constantinianism has a new garb but is otherwise unchanged. To put the matter differently: Growth in the number of adherents does not guarantee authentic growth.

A number of issues beg for further study. For example, what is conversion? Is it a private transaction between the individual and God? Wagner points out that people have many needs, but the one the church is best equipped to deal with is the need to "know God personally." Much contemporary evangelism and church growth center on this need. Yet we cannot understand conversion apart from salvation and discipleship, rich and multifaceted concepts in Scripture. To reduce the scope of conversion deliberately to the private, interior dimension is to take liberties with Scripture which alter its teaching and restrict its authority. When evangelism is separated from discipling, an unnatural and unwarranted division has been created which denatures the gospel. (Cf. David A. Shank, "Towards an Understanding of Christian Conversion," M-F, V:2, November 1976.)

The Bible discussion of growth is devoted to growth of the kingdom. The Gospels contain parables which describe how kingdom growth occurs. Church growth is also illustrated by reports of growing response to the gospel in the early church. We need to think more clearly about the way church growth relates to kingdom growth.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

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FOR MISSION LEADERS

MISSION-FOCUS

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WHERE ARE WE IN OVERSEAS MISSIONS

Donald R. Jacobs

Mennonite Missions in the Context of Modern Missions
Interest in overseas missions among North American Mennonites followed the major Protestant denominations by about 50 years. From a rather slow start this mission activity has grown to substantial proportions today. Statistics for 1972 and 1976 show the current position; the smaller Mennonite mission boards are not included in these calculations.[1]

Table 1

Agency	Number of Workers		Budget for Program Overseas (000s)		Number of Countries		Membership in Overseas Churches
	1972	1976	1972	1976	1972	1976	1976
Brethren in Christ Missions	122	98	$226	$188*	5	5	7,322
Conservative Mennonite Board of Missions	50	55	130	142	3	4	342
Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions	233	174	779	1.4m	17	21	16,000
General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission (including Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission)	164	148	1.2m	2.2m	9	11	41,300
Mennonite Board of Missions	159	150	1.2m	1.2m	16	20	10,000
Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services	181	187	1.0m	2.2m	18	24	68,165**
Mennonite Central Committee	454	466	1.2m	7.4m	38	36	—
TOTALS	1,363	1,278	6.5m	14.7m			143,129

*Does not include furlough allowance and overseas travel.
**Not complete.

Table 2

MEMBERSHIP OF SUPPORTING CONSTITUENCY*

Brethren in Christ	12,475
General Conference Mennonite Church	57,518
Mennonite Brethren Church	34,533
Mennonite Church	105,774**
Mennonite Central Committee	307,811***

*Source: **1977 Mennonite Yearbook**
**Includes Lancaster Conference (16,272 members) and Conservative Mennonite Conference (7,090 members).
***MCC is the relief and service agency of all Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches and has the same supporting constituency as the mission agencies plus groups not represented through the mission agencies listed above.

Some observations can be made on the basis of these figures. The number of missionaries or workers has decreased in the four years by 85 workers or about 6½% while the budgets have increased about 230%. Fifteen new areas were entered during the same period.

The reduction in personnel is attributable to changing character of missions, particularly the gradual nationalization of mission-founded medical and educational institutions. It also reflects the closing of several nations to missions, including Viet Nam and Somalia. It indicates, too, that the overseas churches are perhaps increasingly desirous of financial rather than personnel assistance, as they have a growing pool of qualified persons to place in their leadership roles. Possibly the moratorium issue has had some effect.

A comparison between Mennonite churches and some Protestant churches brings several important things to light. The *1976 Mission Handbook* lists the largest North American missions measured in terms of workers

presently serving overseas as follows:

Church or Agency	Number of workers overseas
Wycliffe Bible Translators	2,693
Southern Baptists	2,667
Seventh Day Adventists	1,360
Church of Christ	1,296
Assemblies of God	1,081
Baptist Mid-Missions	905
The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)	892
New Tribes Mission	864
Christian and Missionary Alliance	790
United Methodists	788

Measured in term of budget for overseas program they are:

Church or Agency	1976 Overseas Budget (000,000)
Southern Baptists	$52
Seventh Day Adventists	25
Church World Service	23.5
Assemblies of God	22.1
World Vision	20.6

The *Mission Handbook* lists Mennonite boards and agencies separately. If they were to be totaled (see Table 1), Mennonites would rank fifth in overseas personnel, 1,278, and high on the lists of budgets with a total of almost $15 million.

The worldwide Mennonite membership is about 30% non-Teutonic. The Mennonite Brethren Church is actually the other way about with a Teutonic membership of 34,533 and a non-Teutonic membership of 68,000, for a total of about 100,000. No doubt some other churches have succeeded proportionately as well as the Mennonite Brethren, but I do not know of such. In Mennonite circles they are unique. The Lancaster Conference (Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions) has more or less produced its own number again overseas and the General Conference has almost managed to do so. These figures are rather startling, to say the least.

There are Mennonite fellowships on all continents organized into regional conferences or fellowships which relate to one another in many ways, particularly through the Mennonite World Conference.

The small, isolated Teutonic church of 1870 is experiencing an explosion of energy which has produced the picture outlined above. The consequences of this extraordinary activity are our legacy.

Mennonite Missions and Mennonite Churches

Mennonite churches have launched full-scale missions programs on the Protestant model with deliberate vigor. Both overseas and domestic missions have assumed a dominant place in Mennonite church life. Having begun rather hesitantly, the church has pulled out all stops to continually expand and enlarge programs.

They are now in at least 45 nations and some agencies are projecting further expansion. No significant leveling off appears likely in the foreseeable future.

The churches established overseas have been adding members at least three times as fast as the Teutonic Mennonite churches.

Why Mennonite churches became so enamored by overseas missions is not clear. Perhaps they saw in their mission agencies a channel through which they could express their concern for the total man. Or they felt that they were in a better position to teach the "all things" than the other denominations. For many, involvement in missions was a legitimate way to be involved in the "world" and therefore attractive for those who desired a more accommodating relationship with secular society. As a result of the spiritual awakening which penetrated their groups Mennonites were uneasy about their isolation. Missions certainly offered a sanctified way of moving into the larger world.

Missionaries became the dolls of the church; in fact, missions became an important ***raison d'etre*** for the existence of the church. The appeal for support for evangelization, development and relief seemed to strike a responsive chord and there is no indication that they have reached the point of "too much."

The mission boards spend more contributed funds than any other agencies within the church. The church must now decide how to keep the mission agencies which were empowered by the church from floating off and acting autonomously.

While it may not be the most helpful to examine the present mission activity as a series of problems, this may be a fruitful way to take stock of where we are. I will sketch three major problem areas: the cultural, the theological, and the methodological. Of course, the most I can do is raise a few of the issues which appear significant to me.

Cultural Problems

The Anabaptist concern with the conversion of the individual which included repentance, amendment of life and the formation of responsible communities of faith was spread, initially, not through the agencies of the civil authorities, but through a vigorous missionary movement. In fact, the gospel spread in spite of the civil authorities, a factor which helped to mold the Anabaptist view of the state and of evangelism. This was not the way of modern missions which were usually encouraged by civil authorities. Modern Anabaptists adopted the missionary methods of the modern missionary movement and in the process themselves became more Protestant.

In the sixteenth century evangelism proceeded spontaneously. Nominal Christians received new life in Christ, were baptized. As in any authentic renewal movement, they then set about testifying to their neighbors that Christ had indeed come into their experience, not through

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Litho in USA

the agency of the church's hierarchy but as a direct result of obedient faith. They emphasized the saving work of Christ and their divinely given new life. They spoke of "walking in the resurrection," a very missionary sentiment. The Anabaptist movement was an authentic missionary movement, one of the earliest non-Catholic mission movements. Because it spread without the aid of the civil powers, it was seen as subversive.

The first two years of the movement produced various tangential tendencies, a further indication that the movement was authentically spontaneous, missionary, and highly pneumatic. Because the movement was in some disarray in the months after its inception in 1525, the brethren met in the village of Schleitheim in February 1527, and came to an agreement on the meaning of Christian liberty. This conference served not only to unify the brethren but resulted in an escalation of missionary zeal. This commitment to evangelization was not without considerable cost. Within five years almost all who attended the meeting had been executed. This has since come to be known as the "Martyrs' Synod." In Moravia where the brethren were relatively free, they pursued their missionary witness in an organized way until about 1600. Then the fire died out.

The white heat of evangelistic zeal among the brethren cooled before they were able to take their message to non-Teutonic people. Persecution and a certain legalism took their toll. Had the movement penetrated Latin, Nordic, Anglo, or Slavic cultures in those early decades, the texture of the movement no doubt would have been quite different from what it was. Seventeenth century Anabaptists formed communities which were really Teutonic subcultures, recognizably Germanic, yet in a sense isolated from the dominant culture. They formalized their religious expressions in Teutonic style. It is noteworthy that this radical movement which began with extraordinary zeal acquiesced, turned around and locked itself into Teutonic forms, deviation from which was tantamount to apostasy.

When portions of these Anabaptist communities subsequently moved into non-Teutonic cultures of Russia and North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they struggled to maintain their faith by preserving their Teutonic subculture. What evangelizing they did during that period presented a one-way cultural street to the new believer: become Teutonic.

This encapsulation in a Teutonic subculture was not significantly altered for three and a half centuries, or about eleven generations. Yet the evangelistic fires never quite went out; Mennonites avoided a cultural concept of Christianity in which membership is gained automatically by birth.

The cultural question, therefore, which faced the Anabaptist brotherhood in North America when revival fanned the smoldering fires into flame in the decades following the American Civil War was quite simple: "Can we maintain our cultural identity and at the same time be engaged in missions?"

At the outset they were buoyed by a hope that this could be done because they purposed to pursue missions in a uniquely Mennonite way in which the "whole counsel of God," the "all things," would be preached and practiced. They interpreted the "all things" as a fuller understanding of the gospel than some who presented a more "spiritual" or "soul-centered" message. At the core of the "all things" idea was the formation of committed, disciplined groups of adult believers who took discipleship and the total needs of man seriously.

They became quite enthusiastic about engaging in missions as Mennonites, and not as simply another Protestant agency. They really believed that they had something special to share, and in 1880 they set about to share it beginning in their own nearby communities. They soon discovered that if gifted persons are set aside for evangelism and church building, people responded to the gospel. Mennonites could evangelize just like other Christians. But as domestic missions were begun the brotherhood had the same cultural expectations of these new non-Teutonic congregations as they had for their own congregations. They were cautious about encouraging local non-Teutonic leadership to emerge, especially if those potential leaders were not themselves moving toward Teutonic expressions of Christian faith. This preconceived unidirectional cultural imperative which was put on non-Teutonic churches was the central issue in domestic missions and remains so until today.

Due to the proximity of most of the non-Teutonic congregations to the Teutonic ones in North American domestic missions and owing to the fact that they were a minority, the cultural threat which they posed for the brotherhood was more or less defused. The Teutonic majority went on reformulating their own community behavior with little reference to the newer churches.

Domestic missions did not upset the Mennonite cultural fruit basket unduly. This, however, was not true of overseas missions, a fact that the brotherhood is only now beginning to fully recognize. Because domestic missions were close at hand, they were expected to conform to the cultural patterns of the Teutonic communities. Furthermore, at the center of many of the non-Teutonic mission congregations one often finds a few influential Teutonic persons schooled in the dominant Mennonite cultures. Non-Teutonic congregations seldom developed a style of gathered life which reflected their own cultural heritage, probably because few authentic leaders, those who did not do obeisance to the Teutonic formalizations but rather sought to "localize" the church, were encouraged to emerge.

Domestic congregations were really an extension of existing conferences and had to conform to certain

"givens" in order to belong. Slowly these non-Teutonic congregations paid their dues and were eventually accepted by the conferences without a hiccough. They were not encouraged to form non-Teutonic conferences.

Overseas missions had a different cultural schema. During the latter part of the nineteenth century when the major Protestant denominations began to get earnest about overseas missions, the Mennonite Church did not quickly jump onto the bandwagon. But slowly they developed their rationale which was to teach the "all things" wherever they went, including a concern for nonconformity to the world and for nonresistant living, all couched in Teutonic terms, of course.

In hindsight, the expectations of the sending church that the missionaries preach the "all things" were not actualized. Mennonite missions overseas were as much informed by the Protestant mission movement as by their own understanding of Anabaptist theology. That understanding was there, but it was an addendum to the Protestant model.

This, in a sense, detached the missioners from the sending culture in a way that domestic missioners were not. Being abroad for five and more years at a time, overseas missionaries increasingly took their cues from their missionary neighbors. The result of their efforts therefore looked more like the typical Western Protestant forms of church life than their own Anabaptist understandings would have led one to expect.

These churches are now quite highly developed and are beginning to ask the cultural questions. They question the universality of the Teutonic understandings of the gospel and many of them are seeking to redefine Anabaptist themes in such a way that they can be applied to their particular, local situation.

After four centuries of life as a Teutonic brotherhood, the Mennonite Church has now emerged as a polyethnic church and will become increasingly so in the next decade. By the turn of the century the Teutonics, the original "charter members" and "bearers of the torch" for three and a half centuries, will probably no longer have numerical dominance in the church.

Overseas mission activity has caused North American Mennonites to ask cultural questions which many other churches have been spared, because Mennonite history is unique in its cultural aspects. For many generations it was culturally isolated and then, almost as by metamorphosis, it changed. That brotherhood must now come to terms with its own understanding of Christ and culture in light of the fact that a third of the brotherhood does not share this cultural trauma. They have little comprehension of and, in fact, little interest in, the Teutonic way of being faithful witnesses. These non-Teutonic members overseas will not pay their cultural dues to the Teutonic brotherhood in order to belong, nor should they. Consequently, they bring into question the former Mennonite understanding of what makes up the "all things." They insist on a review of Mennonite hermeneutics.

Some Theological Problems

In large part, the present theological dilemmas facing the brotherhood vis-a-vis overseas mission arise out of the fact that a growing number of Mennonites have no cultural linkage at all with the events which took place in Germanic Northern Europe in the sixteenth century. They rightfully ask, "In addition to the common bond in the love of Christ which binds us to all Christians, to what are Anabaptists committed which goes beyond this?" This is the nub of the intercultural theological conversation now taking place among Mennonites. Each community continues to theologize, of course, in its particular situation. The Japanese Mennonites, for example, are asking, what does faithfulness to Christ look like in the Japanese situation and how can the Mennonite/Anabaptist experience enrich that understanding? This is the question which each church must ask; it is a missionary question. And it is best done by those who belong to the culture in question. This process must continue and should be encouraged by all. This multicultural theologizing will help to define and refine the salient features of our common faith which are often obliterated by cultural overlay.

This will require a de-historicizing of the Anabaptist movement, or maybe the movement should be so examined that contemporary movements which are analogous to the Anabaptists could be identified as helpful exhibits. In all of this theologizing it will need to be understood that most of the non-Teutonic churches are not being shaped by a history but by a future. The non-Teutonic churches are eschatological, that is, they do their theologizing through the windshield which looks ahead and not very much through the rear view mirror unless, of course, they have meaningful events in their own pilgrimage as a group which can begin to become a "heritage." Perhaps we need to think more about the theology of hope and less about the theology of recovery as we move into the arena of global Mennonite thought.

The Methodological Problem

There are several methodological issues which grow out of the cultural and theological problems. Foremost, perhaps, is the question, "What do we hope to accomplish in transcultural missions?" Do we have in mind a certain exportable Anabaptist model of church life which can be followed anywhere in the world—all that needs to be done is simply to fill in some local equivalents where the Teutonic American ones do not make sense? I have seen a good deal of this and it comes up short. Mission is basically a pneumatic enterprise; and while the missionaries may have some notion about particular concepts, the receiving cultures have the same freedom to experience Christ in their context as the missioner and sending

brotherhood have in their particular context.

In transcultural missions, the new life in Christ should grow out of a movement of the Spirit, a movement of grace, so to speak, in which the new believers are in direct touch, in a demonstrable way, with Jesus Christ. Mennonite churches which are established in the context of forms, or the phenomena rather than the pneumena, are neither Anabaptist nor New Testament churches. Inasmuch as most of the missionaries were nurtured in the Teutonic communities, they had a tendency to lead with the forms in the hope that the spiritual will follow. In this case they were quite like Roman Catholics.

One of the results of this approach is the production of a sort of nominal Christianity in which certain practices are sacramentalized, like church attendance, taboo systems, etc. If these are practiced, salvation is assured. Many Anabaptist fellowships, new and old, need a spiritual renewal badly.

This also contributes to the attrition rate in overseas churches. It is not at all abnormal that only half or less of those baptized are active members of the fellowship after five years. The need for nurture is a paramount need of many of the rapidly growing fellowships, especially in Africa.

I find myself driven to what is for me an inescapable conclusion. Fellowship formation is at the center of missionary methodology because God has chosen to reveal Himself in word and deed through loving communities of hope. There may be other ways of reaching a particular goal, but the God-ordained way is that the Christ-honoring communities of hope which are committed to obedience to the Lord as revealed in Scripture are the best vehicles for the purpose, indeed are in some ways the very purpose itself. Fellowship formation and nurture is the central task of the missionary endeavor.

We have some options. We could "Anabaptize" previously existing Christian communities like one sprinkles salt in soup. Or, then we could just "be" Anabaptist Christians as we are from the base we have in North America by doing deeds of mercy wherever people hurt. Or, we can encourage and participate in the formation of Anabaptist fellowships around the world.

I contend that a large portion, if not the majority, of our energies, and here I refer to the entire Mennonite community's energies, should be directed toward multiplying, adding to, and nurturing Anabaptist fellowships, each one of which is a legitimate contributing member of the total family.

Part of the reason why our eyes have been taken off the centrality of the fellowship is that our missionary methodology is itself quite Protestant. We had our mission boards which behaved like churches, yet in reality were but one agency of the church. We are now struggling to find ways to develop authentic horizontal relationships church to church. Mission agencies almost depress young churches, because they become, in a sense, dispensers of interchurch aid, about the only function they can fulfill. Teutonic churches relate to non-Teutonic churches almost exclusively through the mission administrators from the Teutonic churches. These administrators, instead of relating to their counterparts in those churches, relate to the ecclesiastical hierarchies. Mission agencies are not churches nor should they pose as such. A major problem facing the churches is to establish absolutely equal church-to-church relationships. Perhaps the mission boards can continue to be conduits to appropriate agencies in sister fellowships or conferences but the basic essential relationship must be church-to-church.

We need to review the work of our mission boards. They have become inordinately powerful because they were empowered by the brotherhood. This power too often threatens fellowship instead of enhancing it. But how should this power be diluted? How do all have equal access to the resources of the brotherhood? How is dignity preserved in the donor/receiver situation? As we see more and more the absolute equality of all fellowships under God, we can perhaps make some progress in this area.

Perhaps the day of the mission agencies is over. Some think so. When these agencies interrupt rather than strengthen mutual bonds between the fellowships of believers, then they should be examined carefully. And if the agencies are not responsive to the convictions and hopes of the fellowships involved, but remain isolated power structures which must struggle to stay alive, then they must be called into question.

The Mennonite Church will continue to be a missionary church if it can keep as its central focus the life of the fellowships around the world. The church is basically a skein of fellowships scattered through the communities of earth. When the church forms or assists fellowships, it is engaged in eternal business in a special way. The Anabaptist experience through the centuries confirms this. We must refocus our efforts and honor the fellowships of believers as Jesus Chrrist honors them. We do well to once again concentrate our energies on the formation and strengthening of Anabaptist fellowships among the nations.

Following two decades of missionary experience in East Africa, Donald R. Jacobs has assumed responsibility as Secretary for Overseas Missions, Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities as well as being director of the Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation. He is active as a speaker and writer. His Conrad Grebel Lectures on Christian Theology in Africa will be published by Herald Press.

1. For 1972 information is taken from *1973 Mission Handbook* (MARC, Monrovia, CA) and for 1976 statistics were supplied by the various boards.

AUTHORITARIAN GOVERNMENTS AND MISSION

Wilbert R. Shenk

A decade ago revolution was one of the most pressing problems facing Christian mission. The theologies of liberation in vogue today originated under dynamic conditions where the masses felt themselves to be politically impotent. Revolutionary change seemed to be the only solution.

Now a new theme has entered the picture. Various recent study conferences have dealt with the way authoritarian governments affect Christian mission. The data documenting widespread political oppression mount up daily. Modern technology has proved to be an efficient mistress to dictators by multiplying the means of torture. Contemporary governments of all stripes depend on extensive intelligence gathering systems to help them deal with their allies and thwart their enemies. What has shocked the sensibilities of missionaries and their supporters was that they have been exploited by intelligence agents.

By concentrating discussion on the interplay between authoritarian governments and missions, the more basic question may be obscured. To get hold of the problem, questions must be asked and answered at four levels: theological, strategic, policy, and training.

The Theological Question

What is the Christian's relation to government—whatever type it may be? We should not be surprised that the Christian missionary or service worker should live in tension with society or government. This is normal. The degree of conflict will vary from one situation to another. But what is abnormal is for all tension between the Christian community and society to disappear. This was the point of the Free Church movement protest against Constantinianism—the church was servile before the state.

Quite possibly the world more accurately perceives the true meaning of the church in relation to the world than does the church itself. Christian faith poses a fundamental challenge to the world. Even when present in only weak, anemic forms, the church is an incipient threat. At its best, it asks of its members undivided loyalty. This challenges any government, but it makes the church a direct rival to a totalitarian state.

The mission of the church is not determined by the kind of government a particular country has. The purpose of mission is to lead in the formation of an alternative social order (not simply to deal with individual salvation), and the state may well perceive this as a direct attack on its existence and function.

The issue of church and state is thus joined most sharply and precisely in the missionary situation. In the act of "crossing barriers" a challenge is posed. The crossing takes place for a purpose and that purpose is to introduce change. The gospel challenges traditional, conventional, and hereditary loyalties. It disrupts the life of an individual and the community. It calls for a reordering of life in relation to family, clan, language, nation, and religion.

This new life is based on a new ultimate allegiance. This allegiance is incarnated in a movement of conversion and incorporation into a new community. In saying this, the church does not reject the state. The church is not disrespectful of the state so long as it fulfills its ordained part. But faced with threats of disorder or challenges to its power, and operating outside "the perfection of Christ," the state may abuse power and act inhumanely.

The real question is, by what power will people live? Two forces are present in human affairs. Babel and Pentecost symbolize these alternative powers. Babel displayed to us the way the spirit of this world produces chaos, disorder, disharmony, and miscommunication. The ultimate outcome is destruction and death. Pentecost showed us the power of God as love—reconciling, reuniting, and establishing communication. This new community points to the city of God.

Mission is the means by which God is establishing His reign among men and women. This is reflected in Matthew's statement of the Great Commission. The Gospel of Matthew stresses the importance of the kingdom of Jesus' ministry. For Matthew the Great Commission is a call to Christ's disciples to win other disciples. This involves overturning the conventional divisions among mankind. The new order thus takes shape amidst the disorder of the old. Because government may be one of the means by which the old order is maintained, it may oppose the church which insists on autonomy from the state.

The Strategy Question

What are the specific means by which mission is to be carried out in order to faithfully fulfill its purpose and do so in ways consistent with the ultimate objective? What light do theology and biblical studies shed on strategy? What do we learn from history?

We are evidently unsure of what our strategy should be. To be sure, the church/world relationship is filled with ambiguities. Christians have followed various strategies in the past. Some have willingly accommodated and adapted the faith to the sociopolitical order's demands. "Caesar is Lord" displaced "Jesus is Lord." Others have viewed the church as the third pillar of society—the religious prop necessary to maintain the social order. Some Christians

have neutralized the church's relevance by limiting it to other worldly or "spiritual" responsibilities. By contrast, Christian revolutionaries have insisted, often in apocalyptic terms, that the old order must be swept away and a theocratic alternative installed.

Illustrations of the ways these various strategies have been applied can be found in missionary history. The cross has followed the flag many times in missionary advance. But that is only part of the story. Many missionaries have expended themselves, and some have paid with their lives, to assure the rights of indigenous peoples in opposition to colonists and traders. They combated the slave trade and worked to make colonial policies more humane. Both "guns and ointment," to borrow Kosuke Koyama's phrase, have played their role. Missions showed Christians at their worst and best.

The fact is that missionaries have lacked a clear ethical vision. But they only brought with them what they had been given by the sending church. Constantinianism could hardly have produced anything better. Consequently, no clear or consistent guidelines emerged to give strategic guidance. It is our task to work at these formulations.

As the result of a wider and profounder cultural transformation, the peoples of the world are being bound together ever more closely. The result is that the "age of innocence" is passing. This point was driven home, for example, during the Nigeria/Biafra war 1967-70. There was no possibility of relating to either side in that horrible civil conflict in a way that was purely humanitarian or disinterested. That experience and the Vietnam war have helped us to realize, in retrospect, that humanitarian assistance has seldom been entirely free of political or social implications. We have to come to terms with the politics of charity as well as the politics of development.

The emergence of the modern nation state represents new possibilities for exercising control over people's lives. Centers of power have multiplied and interrelationships have become exceedingly complex. This, in turn, has produced anti-institution, anti-government reactions. It is increasingly difficult to remain naive as life becomes more highly politicized.

What is the special threat an authoritarian government poses to church and mission? As we examine actual cases, we observe certain patterns. There are both rightist and leftist authoritarian governments. Some rightist regimes have proved to be quite congenial toward the church—on certain conditions. These governments have tolerated the church so long as it operated within limits set by the state and was supportive of the state. Leftist regimes typically are based on an ideology (Marxist, revolutionary) and are antipathetic toward religion. In this view religion represents a prime barrier to progress. Ideology is the radical or fundamental alternative to an oppressive status quo. The state is the instrument of this ideology while the church is a tool of the status quo.

Although more careful analysis is needed to show us the impact of these two types of authoritarian government on the church, we have some clues. Where a leftist government promotes overt hostility toward religion, such as in the USSR, the church turns inward. Piety is an interior experience expressed in intense worship and intimate fellowship. Religion survives only out of deep conviction since it is officially and socially discouraged. Rightist governments encourage a culture-religion mentality, lulling the church through official recognition. A thoroughly domesticated church can be valuable as a defender of a government's policies. In both cases the state has assumed complete control of society and determines the scope of the church's service to society through social ministries.

It may be quite easy to agree that the church cannot afford to be merely a handmaiden to the state, but it is another thing to settle on a common strategy of witness to the state. Some argue in favor of a strategy whereby the Christian witness ***confronts*** the power centers. Others favor a strategy of ***infiltration.*** Some people believe the church is called to ***prophesy*** but should not become involved in policy and administrative questions. Still others call for a strategy of ***aloofness*** from the specific political or social question.

But we have also introduced another set of terms: subculture versus counterculture. To be a subculture suggests acceptance of a socially recognized station within the larger society, whereas a counterculture is a group which consciously stands against the mainstream.

The first set of strategies is distinguished from the second by the insistence in the second that any ethical response arises out of a community. Rather than arguing that any one strategy will suffice, it seems more fruitful to envisage a dynamic strategy which incorporates various elements within the framework of a committed community which witnesses to its faith.

The basis of our ethical response must be clear. A strategy must be grounded in a vision. Christ is establishing and extending His reign by creating a new people. He is gathering His people from the peoples and gives to His people a continuing missionary resonsibility to all peoples. The Christian ethic, therefore, is based on this kingdom and the creation of the new community. The creation of this new community and its engagement in mission involves participation in the war of the Lamb.

The Policy Question

What program policies can be formulated which will guide the Christian worker in applying strategy? Assuming that a clear strategy is achieved, we need to move on to develop appropriate policies. These will fall into two groups.

First, we require broad policies that guide program development and decisions generally. In what situations,

with what kinds of people and with which agencies shall we work? By what policy criteria do we judge whether a particular activity is an expression of Messianic reality or reinforcing worldly power structures? Unless we can ask and answer these questions, we do not have usable policy guidelines.

Second, our workers need specific policies for particular contexts. In light of our theological vision and strategy commitments, how will we witness to Christ's purposes. General policies must be applied so they become instruments of direction and evaluation.

The model for the first set of general policies may well be the statement *Christian Conduct in Situations of Conflict* (Council of International Ministries, 1972) designed to provide guidance to workers facing emergencies.

The Training Question

How are people prepared to cope with these complex and demanding situations? In our great hurry to get things done, we have underestimated the importance of training. Jesus himself was in training for a long time before entering on a short ministry. In a world which is becoming more complex, we can ill afford to take shortcuts in preparation. Missionaries and service workers must be trained with the world situation in full view.

The goal of training is to form individuals who incarnate kingdom values, understand the world in which we live, can cross boundaries and cope with the dynamics of intercultural communication and relationship. The kingdom calls for individuals who loosen their own cultural ties and allow themselves to be adopted by another people and culture "for the sake of the gospel."

A major component in training, therefore, is development in the individual of a large measure of self-understanding and awareness. What is the nature of the West in contrast to other cultures? What peculiar handicaps does a Canadian or American bring to the task of crossing barriers? What imprint does a particular theological/ecclesiastical heritage leave on the person and in what ways must this be dealt with as a part of the preparation for service? What kind of spirituality will sustain and enliven the Christian witness?

In the end our witness to the world depends on the people we send. Our congregations and educational institutions all share in the task of formation. The values and ideals instilled along the way will largely determine how the individual will minister "across barriers."

Conclusion

We live in a world rapidly moving toward more authoritarian/totalitarian patterns of government. Political scientists predict that by the year 2000, ninety percent of the world will live under such government. The basic strategic options open to the Christian are relatively limited. The choices made are decisive. We are called to live as citizens of the kingdom of God and sojourners in the world. The ***skandalon*** of the gospel is that it confounds the world by overcoming it in an unworldly way. It is the church's privilege to embody that reality and invite others to join God's people on the Way.

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FOR MISSION LEADERS

MISSION-FOCUS

CRUCIAL ISSUES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Theological education is in ferment around the world. In the missionary context the relationship between theological education and the preparation of leadership for the emerging church is crucial. We can no longer take it for granted that theological education results immediately in new leadership recruits. This complex question may be studied on various levels.

On the policy level we must ask: How integral to the emergence and growth of the church is leadership training? Some missionary agencies have a clear policy. They have identified the training and equipping of leaders as being at the heart of the missionary task. Without high priority on leadership training, the transition from missionary to local leadership will be difficult and deferred unduly. It is important to have clear policy objectives.

On another level we need to ask: What are biblical models for leadership and what training is appropriate according to these models? We are confronted with theological pluralism on all fronts. Patterns of ministry are rooted in the polities of particular traditions. Attempts to adapt ancient Western ministerial patterns—and the concomitant educational systems—to other parts of the world have caused confusion and frustration. The only solution is to examine these situations in the light of biblical precedents.

In our search for fresh answers, we should also examine this question historically. What have been the patterns of church leadership throughout history and how have these functioned in relation to the social, economic and psychological milieux? What insights can be mined out of the deposits of Christian history?

Next we must turn to contemporary experience. What are the present patterns of leadership? Are they culturally understood and theologically sound? Is the church vital and growing? In other words, we need to evaluate the present situation and examine the effectiveness of current patterns of ministry.

That these are not merely academic questions is illustrated by the report from a colloquium on mission/church relations held December 4-9, 1976, in Quito, Ecuador. The meeting was convened and sponsored by Latin American church leaders. The discussions pointed up that Latin American church feelings of dependency on North America were at the heart of mission/church tensions. The findings report is worth noting: "We have become aware of the acute phenomenon of dependence: **theological,** financial, cultural and structural. This fourfold dependence becomes evident in the following facts: **systems of theological education which are not relevant to our reality**; proliferation of literature and educational materials which are mainly translated and are not relevant to our reality because they have come from a

different cultural situation; the formation of structures and institutions which are imposed with neither consultation nor respect for the reality of Latin American countries and will never be financed without foreign help; **the propagation of a theology that makes no distinction between the biblical content of eternal values and the temporary cultural trappings of the missionary.** Unless this new awareness brings changes, missionary societies will contribute to perpetuating unnecessarily this dependence, thus preventing many Latin American churches from achieving maturity and finding their own path of obedience to God for the fulfilling of their missionary mandate'' (Missionary News Service, 24:1, January 3, 1977; emphasis added).

This judgment against the contemporary missions system is far-reaching. Some things are fundamentally wrong and only a wholly fresh answer will suffice. The steps leading to new approaches will be several. First, missionaries and mission agencies must devote much more time to listening. We need to listen to the churches and their representatives as they struggle to define and articulate their vision of what God is calling them to become and the means by which they can move in that direction. Second, we need to listen to history. Today's problems and criticisms are generally old problems which have been subjected to criticism in the past. There have also been attempts at solution. Some succeeded; others failed. All of this experience is available for our instruction. Third, we need to develop and maintain attitudes of humility, openness, and readiness to admit problems and adopt new approaches. What we from the West have been slow to admit is not simply that certain missionary methods have produced frustrated results but that our own church life is suffering from the same basic difficulties. The solutions worked out in a particular Third World context may well contain fresh insights which will provide new direction to the Western church.

This *Mission-Focus* Supplement contains the papers and summary of discussion which took place at a consultation sponsored by the Council of International Ministries (formerly Council of Mission Board Secretaries/MCC Administrators meeting), December 7, 1976. This material is being shared with the wider circle of friends and colleagues in this form in order to stimulate awareness and encourage conversation.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

CRUCIAL ISSUES IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

Hugo Zorrilla

Introduction

In thinking about ''crucial issues,'' two basic ideas occur to me—ideas which in latent form, determine the content of this study paper: 1. Theological education in Latin America finds itself in a critical period which reflects not only a Latin American, but a general worldwide crisis in education. 2. Theological education in our countries has not yet found its own identity. Rather it continues to be a blending of traditional secular education patterns in Latin America and theological education molds from North America—a pattern which responds neither to the genius of Latin American Protestantism nor to the mission which the church is called to fulfill in this continent.

The basic purpose of this paper is to show at a glance the most important aspects of theological training that are being discussed in Latin America and to show why it is necessary to look for contextualized alternatives in theological education that sidestep the traditional scholarly framework.

To think of theological education in Latin America is to confront ourselves with the role of the educator as a minister of the gospel; it is to put into action the function of educating in the educative process; it is to reexamine contents and methodological processes in this apostleship.

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In this sense we ask: What are the objectives of theological education in Latin America today? What is the place of the church in the various programs of theological education? What relation is there between the ministry and theology programs in the seminaries and institutes? In a context of marginality and oppression, with high rates of illiteracy, unemployment, militarism and violence, what does it mean to have programs of theological education? Many such questions distress us profoundly when we think of the teaching task. Something is not functioning correctly when we think of seminaries "producing" pastors as if they were just one more product of a consumer society. The title of a recent article serves as an example of this kind of thinking: "El Seminario Central, Fábrica de Sacerdotes"[1] (Central Seminary, Priest Factory). This is where the problem of theological education begins. How do we conceive education for the ministry? The theological and ideological framework that has defined theological education in the past 150 years in Latin America has presented the ministry of theological teaching as a "means of production" of pastors who, within the elite, direct the church.

Laying aside the historical perspectives of theological education in Latin America, I will limit my exposition strictly to teaching, based above all, on my experience in Colombia and Costa Rica. It is not in vain to say that I am neither a "technician" in education, nor a "specialist" in Latin American problems. I express my thoughts with a great desire for dialogue and a profound recognition of my limitations. These impel me to continue the theological task with my eyes fixed on Jesus, Lord and Teacher.

I. The Crisis in Theological Education

The crisis in theological education has become increasingly accentuated in Latin America during this decade of the 70s. In our countries, as in all modern societies, we live in critical times where nothing is taken for granted. Only after something has been questioned will it be accepted. Fundamental questions are being raised and basic changes are taking place in all areas of knowledge and human action. Education cannot escape this questioning, and of course, neither can the church and, with her, the pertinence of traditional theology. Furthermore, the questioning of the church touches upon the ministry and its relevance in a convulsive, revolutionary, and militarized America. The churches see with dissatisfaction that the labors of the seminaries and Bible institutes are not responding to their needs because they follow patterns inherited from the mission boards. The seminaries go in one direction while the church wrestles in another. Non-contextualized churches carry out a ministry not suited to their reality while seminaries perpetuate theologies, methods, and strategies best suited to churches in an opulent and wealthy society. The opposite case also appears—theological schools and churches which seek new alternatives in theological education and experiment with new programs for training leaders. Two examples are the Association of Bible Churches of the Caribbean on the northern coast of Colombia and the Peruvian Evangelical churches.

Some reasons for crisis inherent to theological education can be detected within the administrative and teaching structures of traditional seminaries and institutes. Before mentioning these reasons, it is necessary to underscore that all these questions of theological education have their theological bases. The problem is one of theology and one of dependence, so much so that the crisis that exists in the centers of theological education in North America and Europe have been accepted as crisis in Latin America. Any decision that affects the church in North America affects its organisms in Latin America or other nations called "mission fields." Many of the basic decisions in regard to the training of leaders are prepared and "cooked up" by the missionaries and the mission boards. This process has been the rule, even in the beginnings of the so-called theological-education-by-extension movement that carried the name of Guatemala to all parts of the world where there are missions.

Now let us turn to some of the reasons for this crisis in theological education which is, I repeat, a theological crisis.

1. **A borrowed theology.** Theological education in Latin America has rested upon the importation of theological content, the emphasis varying according to the mission to which the seminary belongs. Each mission board has duplicated its efforts in order to perpetuate its "biblical truth" with its own institute or seminary. This is why theological schools have proliferated, thus duplicating human forces, expenses, etc.[2] Theological education and through it, theology itself, has come forth as an implantation of academic and theological systems by the mission boards. As a matter of fact, this holy institutionalization has made the seminaries and institutes the centers that give the parameters so that the denomination determines who is and who is not a pastor. This type of academic environment results in (1) a people of God passive in the education of their leaders and helping to perpetuate the dependency of the local church. In this sense, the people of God are not involved creatively in the preparation and evaluation of their leaders. (2) They maintain forms of worship, stereotyped theological categories, and "prepackaged" models of irrelevant ministries.

2. **Copied curricula.** Most seminary and institute programs follow the same curricula as in North America. Successful completion of large numbers of these courses supposedly guarantees both academic and ministerial excellence. Although it is not common today, there are theological schools in Latin America with identically the same curriculum as the theological school in the United

States of that particular mission, or the same program that the missionaries and professors studied at Fuller, Moody, Dallas, etc.

3. **Materials.** Until recently it was difficult to find theological textbooks written by Latin Americans. Most materials used in theological education are translated texts. Usually each mission translates and publishes the textbooks that contain their "true theology." At the present time valuable books are appearing in the fields of ecclesiology, pastoral theology, youth ministries, hymnology, ethics, evangelism, missiology, etc., written by men of God who have their ministries in Latin America.

4. **Professors.** Most teaching personnel in theological schools are missionaries who have no social or cultural ties with the country in which they teach. This is the sad picture of the institutions in Colombia. Many seminary and Bible institute professors, missionaries or not, lack the methodology to allow the student to be a person who actively participates in the educational process. These professors, who often equate their academic excellence and their titles with teaching effectiveness treat their students as a captive audience to be "domesticated," as Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, says. On the other hand, these same professors live detached from the social reality of the peoples of which their students are a part, and from the context it is supposed that theological reflection is carried out.

From this panorama, limited to be sure, we find in Latin America much dissatisfaction with the results of traditional models of theological education. Since the beginning of this decade, theological-education-by-extension as a valid alternative in our context has been attempted, although this form of education is neither new nor the only alternative. The appearance of alternatives in theological education today offers us various options in the politics of theological education. (1) There are those who are wrestling to perpetuate the residential institutions, fortifying them with more academic resources and more missionary personnel. (2) Others believe that the solution for a more efficient ministry in the churches is found in abolishing the residence programs and dedicating all their efforts to theological education by extension. (3) For others, the solution is theological education by extension, but with a curriculum contextualized and open to the local needs. The reason for this is that many extension programs are nothing more than decentralized residence programs. The structure is different, but the curriculum of " canned courses" is the same. In short, it is "the same dog with a different chain." (4) Some within the framework of residential seminaries look for other alternatives such as correspondence, extension, or diversified education with an open curriculum.[3] (5) Others look for a form of continued education which is both experimental and at the same time integrated into the community. Rejecting traditional schooling, they offer an open curriculum, taking advantage of all the resources in the churches. The objectives of this kind of program are the objectives of the church in the community. Some Pentecostal churches follow this line.

II. Contextual Education

Contextual theological education points toward an incarnational or penetrating style of theologizing. It seeks more than a mere identification with the means by which the Holy Scriptures are reread. It is not a folklorism unintegrated with the reality of the church in this moment in Latin America. It is not adaptation, giving the attitude of a superior culture that "sacrifices" itself, identifying with the poor, or that "mimics" folklorically for the benefit of "those poor things." It is to incarnate and to accompany the community of faith in the search for solutions for transforming its reality of sin (called oppression, dependence, exploitation, vices, marginality, etc). Through incarnation contextual education co-operates in the Latin American churches' search for identity. In this process the following elements must be questioned.

1. **The teaching structure.** Most of these programs, whether residential or extension, are controlled by the mission boards or by missionary personnel. This has mythicized the idea that the seminaries will bring the solution to problems in the churches. Furthermore, it is believed that the seminary develops the pastor, that is, that the task of the seminary or institute is to "produce" pastors and leaders in Christian education since the mission board provides everything else.

Here we ask the basic question: What is the role of the seminary? It is no secret that many seminaries and institutes are the most effective forms of sectarian control for the denomination. The crisis is greater if local churches are not in an economic condition to support a professional pastor. It is questionable for our pastors today to live on what the church pays them. The list of frustrated and bitter people in the ministry who have not had the opportunity of acquiring a trade or profession is endless. The attitude of the churches, of the seminaries, and of the missions in this respect is oppressive when they defend the myth that only he can be called pastor who is "full-time." Some theological institutions help their students study a profession or a trade. Latin America cannot afford the luxury of "desk" pastors. Churches which are in a position to support their pastors well are limited in number. The problem expands even more when one sees that in the last several years the number of married students with families entering theological education is greater than the number of single students. This implies that they should have a profession or a scholarship in order to succeed in their studies. The sad part is that churches continue to receive scholarships from missions so that they can continue paying "full-time" pastors.

2. **Curricula.** Previously I said that most of the content in seminary curricula has been imported. Many curricula in theological education have a limited function in the mission of the churches. In no way do they help the student develop his creativity and understandings of the historical moment in which his people live. Many programs lack basic objectives. If they are present, they are the same as those of other institutions in some North Atlantic country (like branch offices).

Another criticism is that seminaries lack church-centered or student-centered curricula. If we took off our tinted glasses of traditional academe, we would see a wide range of possibilities and resources available in our churches which could be integrated into programs of ministerial training, that, on the one hand, would be contextualized, and, on the other hand, would incorporate the learning experiences acquired outside a traditional structure.

3. **Content.** Not only do many curricula in theological education in Latin America lack contextualized objectives, but the units of content respond to other situations. The theological content and materials have not changed even though there are sociopolitical factors that influence our ministry, even if we do not want them to. The "prepackaged" content of theological courses is one of the most discussed elements today in Latin America for those who look for other alternatives in prophetic training. A program is judged nonbiblical, and consequently heretical, if it doesn't have 60-70% biblical content, which consists of studies of memorized "neutral" biblical content without theological reflection or dialogue with the world to which it ministers. Nevertheless, in some seminaries, such as the Latin American Biblical Seminary and in extension programs such as that of the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala, an integration of courses is sought. For example, it has been shown that one can teach Bible content, exegesis, theology, and pastoral principles in a course based on I Corinthians.

The irrelevant situation causes us to think in terms of integrated content in which the social sciences together with biblical and pastoral theology respond together to the present reality. It is vitally important to take into account these factors that affect the focus of theological education in Latin America:

(1) demographic changes, the "tugurios" (miserable cottages resulting from immigration of rural people to the cities)

(2) urban agglomeration with its problems of alcoholism and prostitution, districts of "rural" colonies, or colonies of foreigners

(3) changes in social structure, as a result of industrialization and the growing middle class accompanied by changes in traditional values

(4) transition from societies with economies based on farms to societies based on consumer goods and including industrialized agriculture

(5) political changes within a revolutionary ferment; political conscience-raising of the people living under militarized and oppressive governments

(6) revolution in the means of communication

(7) increase in the educational level and professionalism of church members.

Faced with this panorama of Latin America, theological education should provide men and women of God with the necessary ministerial tools and methodological resources that help develop the abilities of the students in order that the church may fulfill its ministry.

I should point out that theological content in seminaries and Bible institutes is questioned because of heavy emphasis upon a theology of the past. The majority of the courses are informational and based on memorization. Few of them tackle the present realities which impinge upon the theological task of the church and in this sense alienates it from its genuine missionary task.

The topic presented in this paper is of a general order, and it has not been our intention to describe models of theological education that break away from the traditional ones. Nevertheless it is worth mentioning some basic principles to keep in mind when structuring a program of contextualized theological education:

(1) Define groups of students according to academic levels and ministerial interests.
(2) Establish the interests and abilities of the students.
(3) Feel out the needs and realities of the community or the area.
(4) Define with the churches their priorities and projections.
(5) Look for and coordinate sources of human and physical resources in the locality.
(6) Prepare an open and integrated curriculum that incorporates the above principles.

Conclusion

To sum up: What then is the panorama of theological education in Latin America? The truth is that churches do not look for any one and only formula fallen from heaven. They endeavor to obtain alternatives, various possibilities for the training of leaders, not just an elite, but the education of the people of God as a whole, so that the church can understand its world, and what God has for that world.

Why other alternatives? The traditional scholarity of the seminaries does not respond adequately to the needs felt by the church. It is well-known that many leaders are outside the present means of ministerial preparation. It is realized that it is necessary to educate in context and to combine theory with practice immediately. The missiological labor of the church is formed on the march, and in this labor one theologizes and educates, and only thus are abilities developed that form Christians capable of

dialoguing with other theologies or ideologies, but submitted only to the authority of the Bible and the guidance of the Spirit of the Master. Finally, it is the Teacher who confronts us with the foolishness of the Cross in order to make of theological education in the church a risk, a lamentation, a foolishness for His glory, and for the edification of the people of God.

Footnotes

1. Eco Católico. Año XLIV. Tomo 74. No. 2365. San José, 10 de octubre 1976. p. 7.

2. According to ALET (Latin American Association of Theological Schools), in Mexico alone in 1975 there were 120 institutes and seminaries. From Ecuador to Mexico there were 220 institutes and seminaries.

The Theological Education Fund listed the following statistics of schools: In Central America there are 158, with Mexico (99) and Guatemala (23) having the most institutions. In South America there are 159, with Brazil (78), Colombia (27) and Ecuador (13) leading. These figures do not include the schools that did not respond to the Theological Education Fund questionnaire.

3. The Latin American Biblical Seminary in Costa Rica is the institution that has struggled most in this line of thinking. Its PRODIADIS (Diversified Program at a Distance) program promises much under the educational philosophy of the Open University of London and the Universidad a Distancia in Madrid.

CRUCIAL ISSUES IN LEADERSHIP TRAINING: A Chinese Perspective

Jonathan T'ien-en Chao

My task is to identify and to articulate the most crucial issues in leadership training in Third World ministries. I represent two perspectives: 1. that of a student of Chinese Protestant church history with a special interest in the problems of indigenization and leadership training, and 2. that of an initiator and promoter of Chinese indigenous theological education in connection with the China Graduate School of Theology (CGST), now operating in Hong Kong.

A decade ago a few of us Chinese theological students in the United States first took up the problem of Chinese theological education seriously. During these ten years my own views on leadership training have undergone three stages of development. I would like to share them with you briefly, as these reflections will color my analysis of the topic at hand.

During the initial years of our movement (1966-1970), along with other members of the founding team, my compelling concern was how to upgrade the quality of the Chinese ministry. We concluded that the key to this problem was the training of university graduates in a graduate school of theology where they might be equipped to become learned pastors who could rightly expound the Scriptures and ably defend the Christian faith against liberal theology and modern secular thought. This was to be done by a committed team of Chinese scholars and supported primarily by the Chinese Christian community. The emphasis then was on academic excellence, and we began to recruit and train a Chinese faculty in advanced studies.

However, as I was sent to Asia for a short term of teaching ministry (1970-1972), I had occasion to travel and to study the various problems facing the Chinese church today. Consultations and interviews soon enabled me to see that leadership training for church ministries required different levels and varying programs in accordance with the diversities of local needs; that lower levels of training and lay training are equally important as graduate training; and that these levels must be coordinated to avoid unnecessary tension. Thus in 1972 CGST adopted the multilevel and multiprogram approach to Chinese theological education. The graduate school that has been opened in Hong Kong since 1975 is basically following the above ideals accrued from the first two stages of our reflection (1966-1974).

In 1974 when I began the task of program design for our school, I was soon faced with the challenge of integrating the academic, the practical, and the spiritual components of theological training within the context of a seminary. Studying the historical development of ministerial training

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in China since 1865 and reflecting upon it in the light of the biblical teachings on the Christian ministry, I have gradually come to see that no authentic integration can be brought about by mere program design, however perfect that might be. It can only be done, I venture to say, by conscientious identification with the life and ministry of Christ and by experiencing the efficacy of that identification spiritually within a community of believers (functioning as the body of Christ) who are committed to the practice of radical discipleship in the manner prescribed by Jesus Himself and the Apostles. This is the direction in which I hope our school will go in the future.

It is in the light of these reflections that I wish to discuss and identify some of the most crucial issues in leadership training for today's ministries in the Third World which, I am sure, will also have implications for ministries in America. But in order to sharpen our perception of current issues and to provide a larger context for our discussion, I will attempt to analyze issues in leadership training that arose from the experiences of the Christian mission in China as well as issues that are being perceived by theological educators in Asia today. From these surveys it will become evident to us that differing historical and cultural contexts and preconceived concepts of leadership training influence people's perception of issues.

I. Leadership Training in China (1842-1949)[1]

The development of Protestant ministerial training in China may be roughly divided into three stages of growth in mission work. The timing of these stages differs, of course, from region to region depending on when the pioneer work began and how densely the region was "occupied" by missions. In the coastal regions mission work began in the five treaty ports (Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai) after 1842, following the conclusion of the Opium War (1839-1842). But in the interior cities like Tientsin, Peking, and Hankow, mission work did not begin until 1861-1865, following the second Anglo-Chinese War (1858-1860) in which China lost again, and through which treaty the right to missionary travel and propagation was secured. Regions in Western China were not occupied by missionaries until 1890-1900. Each of these stages of development usually took 25-30 years.

During the first stage of pioneering mission work, missionaries concentrated on field evangelism and medical work as "pre-evangelism." Missionaries carried out their leadership training through a "station plan." They would pick some of their converts to be their assistants and trained them on the job, supplementing this with Bible lessons given privately and through short-term instruction. Missionaries in those days were usually not university graduates, but many were spiritual giants, men of faith and of evangelistic passion. In their training of "native helpers," they emphasized the cultivation of spiritual life, growth in faith, and improvements in the art of speaking through street preaching.[2] The exigencies of their times required the training of personal assistants in preaching, in visitation, in hospital care, or in school teaching. These "native assistants" were paid, controlled, and supervised by missionaries. They were seen as extensions of the arms of the missionaries. Ministerial training was not understood in terms of "leadership training," though theoretically some missionaries hoped that eventually these assistants would become pastors and "native leaders."

The second stage of development usually came after some 25-30 years of intensive evangelistic cultivation and church planting so that a Christian community gradually emerged, including the incorporation of a growing number of "covenant children." By this time mission schools on the primary level began to become well established, secondary schools were beginning to be initiated, and dispensaries became hospitals. Missionaries became more interested in the development of the institutional aspects of their work, and more "native helpers" were needed to staff these institutions, some of whom required professional training in addition to general mission education. The rise of institutions demanded a new class of more educated missionaries. Under the inspiration of the Student Volunteer Movement in England and America in the 1890s,[3] a new influx of university and seminary graduates entered foreign service and met this demand.

As this group of younger elitist, intellectual missionaries arrived in China, they were usually given institutional responsibilities. Their passion for academic excellence soon made them critical of both the state of mission schools and of the style of ministerial training begun by their predecessors. These scholar-missionaries, therefore, began to crusade for upgrading the mission schools, establishing secondary schools, and opening theological institutes—all aimed at developing an educational system for the training of a "better qualified, learned native ministry." Thus ministerial training during the second stage assumed an institutional form patterned after the British model of theological colleges, which combined liberal arts and theology, and the American model of Bible schools and denominational seminaries.[4] This institutional approach was essentially an attempt to transplant the Western model of parish ministry and seminary style training into the Chinese context. During the heyday of Protestant missions in China, there were more than 64 such theological schools of varying levels under the supervision of some 130 missionary societies and boards.[5] As was to be expected, the personnel, the finance, the contents, and the administration were all under denominational missionary control.

The third stage was usually ushered in after 50-60 years of mission work in cities or regions of heavy missionary concentration, such as the major cities Amoy, Shanghai, Tientsin, Peking, Hankow, and Canton. Stimulated by

discussions on cooperation and union in the national missionary conferences of 1890 and 1907, missions in each region began to move in the direction of union theological schools. Missionary personnel and financing were shared by participating missions. Thus this third period was marked by the rise of union theological schools supported by most of the older missions. This resulted in a general upgrading of academic standards, the professionalization of staff and administration, and the erection of institutional buildings modeled after the university or seminary structures of their schools in the West.[6] As American missions began to take on more prominence in the number of personnel and financial power after 1900, these union schools were usually patterned after the American model of seminaries, where the ideal standard of admission was the liberal arts degree. But since the number of college graduates was rather limited in number and the need for workers remained high, most students admitted even in these union schools from 1912-1950 were high school graduates.[7]

A few crucial issues in leadership training can be observed from the above survey. Some of these were openly debated among the missionaries, others were questioned by Chinese Christians; but, as a rule, they were ignored by missionary educators.

The first crucial issue, which became an area of tension between older pioneering missionaries and younger educational missionaries, was whether the Chinese preacher should be trained by the "station plan" or the "school plan." Advocates of the former argued on the basis of Jesus' method of training the twelve and that of Paul's training of Timothy. They also argued that training men converted in their adulthood in the crucible of actual service produces rugged and faithful workers who know their people well. They despised the school plan whereby students were molded in the protected atmosphere of the mission school with subsidy. The educational missionaries criticized the station plan as incapable of producing Chinese preachers who are thoroughly grounded in the Scriptures and in "Christian civilization." They despised Chinese preachers trained under older missionaries as being "too Confucian" in their thinking, and hence not really thoroughly converted from Confucius to Christ. To them, this cultural conversion could not be done except by a long process of formation through the system of mission schools from the primary level to the theological school. Each side in this dogged debate did not seem to see the historical and regional differences under which each plan developed. In the end as older missionaries passed away and as "unoccupied regions" diminished, the school plan won the day. After the founding of the Republic in 1912, most missions unwittingly accepted the institutional model of leadership training as the standard form, and the apprenticeship model simply faded out of history.

A second crucial issue that remained unsolved was the goal of ministerial training. As already intimated, during the first stage ministerial training was not conceived in terms of "leadership training," but the training of second-class employed "helpers." There were medical helpers, educational helpers ("teachers"), and evangelistic helpers ("native preachers" or "native evangelists"). These were called "native assistants." During the second stage the training of "Chinese preachers" was for the purpose of staffing street preaching chapels, outstations, and general evangelistic outreach under the direction of missionaries. At a later stage experienced assistants were occasionally ordained to the pastorate of a self-supporting church. During the third stage union theological schools aimed at producing pastors as well as evangelists and various other posts within the mission and church system of full-time service. The pastoral training model was used for all types of ministry. In all of these, the goal of training seems to have been based on the training of certain professional skills for evangelistic or other types of churchly activities. In other words, training was centered on performance or knowledge related to performance under a given system.

A third issue raised by a small minority of missionary thinkers and also by Chinese Christians was whether the Western institutional form of ministerial training was the best for the Chinese situation. Inseparably connected with this doubt were questions about the validity of the Western model of the full-time paid professional clergy, marked by a long process of professional training and ecclesiastical ordination. The missionaries' right to transplant the Western model of ministry and of training was not seriously questioned, but their functional effectiveness was.

John Nevius (1829-1893), Presbyterian Mission in Shantung, advocated, and even successfully worked out, a volunteer system of unpaid elders to whom he entrusted the care of local stations.[8] His main point was to prove that an alternative to "employment systems," and to the "school plan" was possible. But few of his fellow missionaries listened to him as those in Korea did.

Perhaps the most vocal challenge against the professional clergy and against the institutional form of training came from Chinese independent churches that separated themselves from foreign missions, especially the Little Flock (Watchman Nee group). These dissidents were against Western denominationalism, against missionary control, against rational theology, and against the entire structure of institutional Christianity. These independent churches developed their own form of training through the development of spiritual gifts within local churches.[9]

A fourth issue was the place of Chinese culture and social studies in a theological curriculum. This issue was raised by Chinese Christian intellectuals more vocally during the anti-Christian movement period of 1922-1927.[10] But being primarily discussion among Chinese with few

Chinese Christian leaders occupying administrative positions in theological schools, the matter was not perceived by missionary educators as a crucial issue.

1949-76. Chinese theological education in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia during the last 27 years has been more or less following the same institutional models of Bible schools (for junior high graduates), and of theological seminaries (high school graduates combined with some college graduates) as developed in China. In fact, many schools were simply transplanted from China to Hong Kong or Taiwan by foreign missions during the early 1950s. Most of these schools are still financed by foreign missions and, until recently, headed by missionaries. Thus issues in leadership training that arose in China 1912-1950 remain basically unsolved by church and mission operating in Taiwan and Hong Kong.[11] (More on this below.)

II. Analysis of Current Views on Crucial Issues in Leadership Training

I will present briefly four perspectives on theological training in the Asian context: 1. views of the Theological Education Fund directors, 2. views of ecumenical theological educators within the Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia Associations of Theological Schools, 3. evangelical views as expressed by the Asian Theological Association, and 4. Chinese evangelical views as expressed by the Association for Promotion of Chinese Theological Education.

Historical Shifts in TEF's Perception of Issues

The Theological Education Fund represents a concerted effort on the part of ecumenical churches and missions to deal with the problem of training for ministry in the Third World. Founded in Ghana in 1958 under the International Missionary Council, TEF's perception of issues underwent three stages of development during three "mandates." Their evolution in view is of great significance.[12]

During the first mandate period (1958-1964), TEF basically operated as a central agency of missionary concerns for theological education in the younger churches founded by the mainline denominational mission boards. In many cases these were union schools, like those formed in China. During this period TEF defined the chief issue to be how to raise the level of academic standards in Third World theological schools. Its goal was to improve academic excellence by providing grants to key schools for building construction, faculty training in the West, library development, and textbook production through translation projects and occasional original writing. At that time TEF did not question the Western character of those theological schools or the problem of continued missionary leadership in administration and teaching. TEF sought to make Third World theological schools like seminaries in the West, and it did so through foreign funding for institutional buildup. At the end of the first mandate, however, TEF realized that strengthening of academic standards externally did not necessarily bring about the indigenous theological education which they sought.[13]

During the second mandate period (1965-1970), the Third World experienced a resurgence of local religions and the emergence of urbanization and its accompanying problems. TEF, by then under the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of WCC, began to devote its attention to the interpretation of the gospel in relation to local culture and society and saw the issue of theological education as how to do it within the context of local cultures. Emphasis was placed on the **milieu** in which the ministry was to be carried out. During this period TEF also encouraged the formation of regional associations of theological schools and intensified its program of faculty development for nationals. Over 400 individual grants were given to Third World nationals for advanced studies in the West leading to masters and doctoral degrees.[14] Presumably TEF's attempt was to develop relevant regional theological education through training national theological educators and teachers to the level of their Western counterparts. The model of excellence was taken from seminaries in the West. Qualifications for leadership training were measured by academic degrees. While many nationals did receive advanced academic training in the West and some even returned, TEF efforts to develop faculty for Taiwan must be considered a failure because most of those trained eventually came back to America after a short period of service. They were reabsorbed into American Christian organizational structures for which they seemed to be better fitted than the church situation in Taiwan. It is doubtful whether TEF achieved its goal of providing relevant theological training for local cultural milieux. TEF did realize at the end of the mandate that advanced training in the West was not conducive to regionalization of ministerial training.

During current mandate period (1971-1977), Third World churches and societies are faced with a crisis of faith and are searching for meaning in life in a post-Christian era. WCC is concerned with social justice, liberation, and human development. Within this context TEF began to ask a most fundamental question: "What is theological education?" But the stress is not so much on the "what" **per se** in terms of **content** as on "what is it **for**—in the context of the contemporary, revolutionary world?"[15] This concern leads to the quest for forms of theological training and ministry that are authentic to particular contexts within Asia,Africa, or Latin America. This quest marks the first breakthrough in the concept of ministry and theological training. It has given the green light to deviation from the Western model and even to questions about the validity of defining excellence merely in academic terms.[16] One way by which TEF is

expressing this concern is to encourage the establishment of regional graduate schools of theology within local cultural contexts rather than always sending graduate students to the West. TEF is also encouraging research within each region, especially centers which redefine criteria of excellence in terms of local cultural settings and even non-degree programs. However, at this point, there is no convincing evidence that TEF or its associated regional associations are seriously questioning the Western model of paid professional trained ministry. Nor are they departing from the centrality of the academic curriculum as the heart of theological training. Until these two strong pillars are radically shaken, it seems unlikely that TEF can truly fulfill its third mandate.

However, there is a sign of hope. It may be found in Director Shoki Coe's thinking on theological education as a process of formation, an ongoing movement of discerning the place and role of the text (gospel) within the missiological context, which he calls "contextualization." Dr. Coe speaks of a threefold formation process: 1. Christian formation: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20); 2. theological formation: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ" (Phil. 2:5); and 3. ministerial formation: "I work, but not I, but the ministry of Christ works in me" (applying Gal. 2:20).[17] Thus far, this appears to be the most promising insight from TEF thinkers, though it is not yet evident that this threefold formulation has found its way into the programs of schools traditionally supported by TEF. It is my hope that these formation principles will become the theme for TEF's fourth mandate.

Asian Perspectives on Issues within the NEAATS and ATSSES

Asian ecumenical perceptions of crucial issues in theological training follow that of TEF's fairly closely because of the latter's influence through Shoki Coe and Ivy Chou. According to Dr. Emerito P. Nacpil, current director of the Association of Theological School in Southeast Asia (ATSSEA), in the past member schools of the Association have pursued academic excellence. But now they are beginning to realize that such an approach has proven to be inadequate and even damaging to the spiritual aspect of their efforts. They are beginning to realize the need for moral and spiritual development. So the current crucial issue for them is: What form of spirituality goes hand in hand with academic excellence? The problem Nacpil faces is that ATSSEA does not know what kind of piety goes well with academic learning.[18]

Even the kind of academic excellence advocated by ATSSEA is now under question by its own constituencies. The tension between seminaries and churches appears to grow stronger. Thus the second issue raised by ATSSEA is: What sort of theological orientation would be most useful to the Asian churches at this time? By theological orientation Nacpil meant "a kind of theoretical knowledge that will provide concrete guidance in the management of Asian affairs."[19] In other words, it is a kind of practical knowledge for an activist type of contextual ministry.

The search for spirituality in theological training is also being voiced by educators in the Northeast Asia Association of Theological Schools (NEAATS). Speaking from the Taiwan situation, Dr. David Chen, former principal and professor of ethics at Taiwan Theological College, asked: How can we raise the moral and spiritual standards of the students, that is, how do we develop moral and spiritual sensitivity in terms of trust in God and love for neighbors?[20] In 1974 the NEAATS commissioned a committee in Taiwan to study the matter of spiritual development of theological students. The committee's report urged member schools to regard spiritual development as a central ingredient to the process of theological education and suggested a community approach to the problem.[21]

Speaking from a Korean perspective, Chung Choon Kim saw the issue as how to relate theological training to the mission of the church.[22]

Thus, taken together, theological educators within the ecumenical circle in Asia are raising a fundamental issue in current theological education: How to develop spirituality as a reaction to over-academicism. This is interesting from two perspectives. In the first place, it represents a significant form of Asian reaction against the Western pattern of academic emphasis even in schools which have traditionally been regarded as ignoring spiritual values in their pursuit of academic excellence. In the second place, Northeast Asians (Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese) are beginning to sense a lack of spirituality which used to be present in their traditional moral/religious systems, namely, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. Mere intellectual study of rational theology is proving unsatisfactory in the Asian quest for Christian spirituality.

Evangelical Asian Perspective (ATA)

The Asian Theological Association, which emerged out of the Theological Assistance Program-Asia (TAP-ASIA) consultation in Singapore in 1971, is currently dealing with issues considered by TEF during its first and second mandates. They are concerned with the development of national faculty, the formation of an accreditation system raising academic standards, and how to bring about an integration of the academic, the spiritual, and the practical aspects of theological training.[23]

While evangelicals in Asia are conscious of their spiritual heritage, the goal that is being pursued is also academic excellence, and the model adopted is also the Western institutional form of ministerial training, namely, the seminary system, including Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Because of this unques-

tioning acceptance of the Western seminary model, like TEF's first two mandates, evangelicals are pursuing virtually the same goal as the ecumenical schools did, namely, to raise the academic level and to respond to the Asian situation. The basic difference is one of theological content, not the form of expression. As Asian ecumenicals follow Western liberal trends, likewise Asian evangelicals are basically following the pattern of American evangelicalism in their theological training. There is a basic dichotomy between evangelical pietism on the experiential level and evangelical theological education on a rational level. The academic, the spiritual, and the practical form a trichotomy and remain essentially compartmentalized. How to integrate these three aspects was the main issue discussed at the Third ATA Consultation in Hong Kong, December 27, 1973-January 4, 1974. Even though two papers were presented on this subject, there appeared to be no significant conceptual breakthroughs in the structure or form of integration.[24] While both papers acknowledged the difficulty of achieving effective integration and saw the need of training in community, neither of them provided any theological framework of the seminary community as the basis for integration. What was reiterated was the importance of personal contacts between the faculty and students (including living together) and among the students, chapels, retreats, dormitory life, and field work. The Confucian stress on the influence of the teacher's personal character was made. This problem of integration remains unsolved while every evangelical school seems to fear losing spiritual vitality and suffering from haphazard practical programs under the pressure of "academic excellence."

Chinese Evangelical Perspective

Chinese evangelicals in diaspora during the past 27 years since China became Communist have been developing in diverse forms.[25] In leadership training they vary from functional training through service on the local church level to Bible school-seminary model of training.

During 1972-1973 two consultations of Chinese theological educators and church leaders were held in Hong Kong and Baguio, the Philippines, respectively. We have not had further opportunity for sharpening our definition of issues. But from the two consultations two issues appear to stand out: 1. how to develop theological education according to the needs of the Chinese church. There has been a clear recognition that seminary style leadership training has not been successful in producing real leaders for the church and that relevant and effective models of training must be judged by their usefulness in fulfilling the needs of the church. 2. how to provide a continuing education program for ministers already pastoring churches, but who find themselves inadequately prepared for their ministry.[26]

The real problem among Chinese evangelicals is that we have not yet been able to analyze clearly in depth what the needs of the Chinese church are, or what the church's ministry should be other than the traditional evangelical concept of evangelism, church growth, and missions as we have inherited them from the West. The common lack of awareness of crucial issues in leadership training is clearly reflected in the "Covenant" of the Chinese Congress on World Evangelism held in Hong Kong, August 18-25, 1976, by its conspicuous absence. The section on "theological research and writing" deals with theological production in the Chinese language. Nor is the subject of leadership training mentioned elsewhere in the Covenant. This lack of sensitivity to the cruciality of leadership training is probably due to an unquestioning acceptance of the traditional pattern of the ministry and its concomitant style of ministerial training through theological schools.

III. The Fundamental Issue: Leadership Training or Shepherd Formation?

From the above analysis of issues as perceived by missionaries in China (1900-1950) and by theological educators in contemporary Asia (1951-1976), it becomes clear that there is a wide range of opinion as to how ministerial leadership should be trained and what constitutes the most crucial issues. Opinions differ according to a few basic variables: 1. how the goal of the ministry is defined, 2. the socio-historical context, 3. the stage of growth of the Christian community involved in the ministry, and 4. the loyalty and background of those involved in leadership training. Correct discernment of one's particular situation in which leadership development is sought becomes, therefore, very important. Failure to discern correctly can, and often does, lead to absolutizing a particular historical variable, such as the acceptance of the Western model of the minsitry and of its training style in the Third World.

These variables often become areas of tension, and many of the issues observed above arise from these tension situations. Some of the most frustrating and practically insoluble tensions may be seen in the inherent contradiction between the spiritual goals of the ministry which Third World churches read in the New Testament and the academic goals of training which are embedded in the seminary model imported from the West, and in the contradiction between professed goals of indigenization of the church and the persistent acceptance of the Western model of the professional clergy. It appears, therefore, that such fundamental problems cannot be solved in a piecemeal fashion by upgrading the academic level of a theological school, or looking for some kind of spirituality that goes well with academic excellence, or even attempts at integrating the academic, the spiritual, and the practical. All these perceptions assume the

validity of the institutional model of ministerial training. They have failed to question the system as a whole on the level of the ministry itself and from the biblical perspective.

What Is the Ministry for Which Leaders Are Trained? This is the most fundamental question,[27] for the style of training must be determined by the nature of the ministry. Ministry is the purpose and training is a means. A certain concept of the ministry will demand a certain kind of leaders which require a certain type of training. Studies in the development of the Christian ministry in India and in China have shown that the concept of the ministry that was introduced there in the nineteenth century and persists even now is the model of the professional pastor from the English-speaking West. This model of a full-time paid ministry is basically a package deal. In it is included: 1. the system of institutional training with its inherent emphasis on academic learning and through it the internalization of secularism, 2. the concept of self-support in terms of a congregation's ability to support such a full-time clergy, and 3. the institutionalization and professionalization of the ministry as symbolized by licensure, ordination, and the myths of status, rank, and authority that go with them. The extent to which this institutional ministry still retains the spiritual character of the New Testament pattern of ministry is a debatable question and one which is increasingly being asked by Third World churches.

Herbert T. Mayer, professor of historical theology at Seminex, St. Louis, has succinctly outlined what may be called the transmutation of the Christian ministry since the fourth century.[28] He noted that ministry in the early church from Jesus to Tertullian was basically a ministry of small Christian communities, wherein believers ministered to each other, centering upon Jesus the Lord whose presence and gifts to the community were administered through the Holy Spirit. Leaders of the community were peers elected to be spiritual leaders in order to enhance the ministry of the community. They had two basic roles: serving and guiding. Leaders considered themselves to be imitators of Christ and guides for their fellow believers in the ongoing process of imitating Christ.

As congregations grew in number, however, the administrative role of a bishop, such as Cyprian of Carthage, began to take on more prominence. Spiritual guidance became transmuted into ruling and together with it came administrative authority. With the accession of Constantine in A.D. 312, there occurred a great influx of people into the church, resulting in lowering the standards of discipleship, infiltration of secular values into the church, and breakdown of values held earlier by Christian communities such as sacrifice, self-giving, love, and commitment to justice and liberty. Ambrose, therefore, began to advocate that church leaders practice true discipleship. Monastic institutions began to develop and gradually a dichotomy between clergy and laity also emerged. A superior rank for the clergy was assumed and their ruling role became even more prominent. But the clergy among themselves sought to develop spirituality as small group communities, and the concept of pastors as imitators of Christ still prevailed. Prior to the seventeenth century the clergy still saw themselves as preachers of God's goodness, grace, and forgiveness and sought to preserve charity and justice in the society. But after the Enlightenment the idea of the pastor as an imitator of Christ gradually faded away. Today we are all too familiar with the image of a pastor as a preacher, as a full-time administrator, and as the leader of his congregation. Thus there is a serious discrepancy between the biblical concept of the ministry as practiced by the early church and the modern concept as developed by the Western church. The most fundamental issue facing Third World churches is which model to adopt: the early church model or the modern Western model of the ministry. The mode of training will follow from that choice.

Whose Ministry and Who Are the Trainers?
The "what" of the ministry can best be understood in terms of "whose ministry is it?" In modern Protestant missions ministry is most commonly understood as denominational ministry. A man would often introduce himself as a minister of such and such denomination because his ordination comes from that denomination, which also determines the sphere of his ministry. Or, under the influence of various types of individualism, people often talk of "so and so's ministry." In most of these cases the ministry is defined in terms of organized activities.

But the New Testament interpretation of the ministry is that all Christian ministry is essentially Christ's own ministry, and our ministry is basically an extension of the ministry of Christ carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Christian ministry is, therefore, essentially a pneumatic ministry that is Christ-directed and that directs to Christ. What does this imply for training? Does it not imply that Christ Himself is the chief trainer and the Holy Spirit is the dean of Christ's school of ministry? This calls for rethinking the role of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in every model of ministerial training.

The current institutional system of church leadership training assumes that only scholars with masters and doctoral degrees (usually obtained from the West) are the ones who are qualified to engage in leadership training for the Christian ministry. When examined under the light of New Testament teaching, this assumption is more than presumptuous; it is an usurpation of Christ's prerogatives. The presumptuous character of the situa-

tion is seen in the question: "Whose training goals? Christ's or the scholars' or that of a mission/church?"

What Is the Goal of Ministerial Training?

Goals for ministerial training in theological schools today are usually stated in the catalogs. These goals, in summary, are: to train men (and in some cases, women) for pastoral or other diversified ministries of existing institutional churches so that they can adequately perform their duties in preaching, teaching, visitation, and administration. In other words, to keep the institutional churches going and growing. This type of ministry requires a kind of training that only theological schools of significant stature can provide. Because the ministry has become so professional, ministers must be trained in a very professional manner. That is why theological schools must have highly trained scholars and experts in order to produce quality professionals. Once this elitist concept of a professional ministry is accepted, the goal of academic excellence in theological training becomes inevitable. In this search for academic excellence, at least three essential elements (or sub-goals) in ministerial training must be sacrificed: 1. spiritual development of the seminary community as a whole; 2. spiritual leaders who do not possess higher academic degrees; and 3. the development of new or spiritual forms of training which conflict with the institutional system or which threaten the pursuit of academic excellence. There are also built-in pressures from within the school system as well as from the churches for persisting in the pursuit of academic excellence. Both the school system and the church at large have so sanctified this secular value that they pursue it with a religious devotion, believing that it is all for Christ's glory. In spite of this blind devotion, however, a survey of Third World theological education would testify that most schools have failed to attain their goal of academic excellence. Meanwhile, both students and faculty suffer from spiritual starvation.

The New Testament does not seem to separate goals of the ministry from the goals of training. While interpretations may differ on this point, we can say that the overall goal of the New Testament concept of the ministry is for the new Messianic community to grow corporately into the likeness of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a corporate mutual sharing or imparting of a variety of "grace" given by Christ for the upbuilding of the body of Christ. Even those whom we would call "leaders," are designated by their spiritual functions: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Their common function was to "equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-12). Training takes place in the acts of ministry within the community, and the actual exercise of gifts provides the occasion for growth.

The New Testament provides many images for those who are called into the ministry. But the dominant image seems to be that of a shepherd, an undershepherd to be sure, serving under the great shepherd of the flock. Christ's charge to Peter after the resurrection was precisely in terms of being a shepherd (John 21:15-19). The undershepherd is to go ahead of the flock in following Christ, in living out the death and resurrection of Christ in their midst and, if possible, to die for the flock. In the undershepherd is incarnated the meaning of the life and death of Christ, and in living example he is "to mediate the dying and living of Christ" to his flock.[29]

What does this concept of the ministry imply for training goals? Does it not imply that the undershepherd knows the chief shepherd experientially, especially in the pathway of the cross which Jesus trod by way of union with His death and resurrection? Does it not imply that he receive a revelatory knowledge of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" and the "plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God" (Eph. 3:8-9)? Does it not mean that he should be learning a shepherd's heart that loves and cares for the flock? Does it not call for faithfulness to the chief shepherd and master in discharging his duties? In a word, the goals for training of such an undershepherd are none other than to **be** like Christ, to **think** like Christ, and to **serve** like Christ. It is submitting oneself to the Spirit so that Christ might be reproduced in the undershepherd, who then will minister to the flock so as to reproduce Christ in them. This is a work which no institutional school of higher theological learning can do. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, the great teacher of the truth, the only one who is able to form Christ in the very fiber of an undershepherd's life. It is not exactly training. It is spiritual **formation.**

How and Where Does Spiritual Formation Take Place?

Spiritual or personality formation always takes place within a living environment. It is a process of transformation that touches the depth of one's being, that reshapes his motivating values, and that produces an entirely different world view. That transformation involves a living model (Christ), a spiritual artist who is the molder (Holy Spirit), and a living organism within which transformation takes place (the Christian community). In the early church that community was the local church which practiced true discipleship as a living body of Christ. Today a local church is usually a unit of organization that only partially practices discipleship, and often small groups have to be formed within a congregation to practice Christian community life in a spiritual manner. But whenever and wherever a group of believers gather together in the name of Jesus and function as a living body of Christ according to the New Testament model it becomes a living community.

Wherever Christ rules and the Holy Spirit ministers is the spiritual community wherein spiritual transformation takes place. This implies that even a theological school, if it transforms itself into a living spiritual community and practices true discipleship as a local body of Christ, can bring about the kind of spiritual formation that the early church communities did. If this is attempted seriously, the problem of integration of the academic, the spiritual, and the practical would be solved naturally. The place of learned scholars and experts would also fall into their proper place within the body-life as varieties of natural as well as spiritual gifts. This is risky, however, because turning a theological school into a living spiritual community could mean a total transformation of earlier institutional values. But this is exactly what we are hoping for, isn't it?

Therefore, the issues are not how to make training more relevant to the cultural-historical context, not how to bring about integration of trichotomous values, not how to develop a type of spirituality that goes well with academic excellence, but rather how to de-secularize our concept of the ministry and its training style, and how to realize an authentic pneumatic identification with Christ and with His ministry. For overemphasis on the context often distracts our attention from the text, and undue concentration on the text often diverts our attention from the author of the text, resulting in a rational approach to the ministry and to the task of spiritual formation. Christ is not meant to be objectified by our rational "Christologies" but to be formed in the hearts and lives of those who have responded to His call. The text is not meant to be deified, nor its teachings to be dogmatized by human rational formulations, but to be incarnated in lives of those who behold its glory, transforming them into living texts that reflect the image of their author, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. This is what leadership training, or rather shepherd formation, is all about.

Footnotes

1. The following analysis comes primarily from my own research. For more source information, see "Selected Bibliography on Chinese Theological Education" compiled by me in 1974 (CGST, Inc., P.O. Box 267, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907.).

2. See Jonathan Lees (LMS, Tientsin), "The Best Method of Selecting and Training Native Preachers, etc." *Records of the General Conference of Protestant Missionaries of China* (Shanghai, 1890), 483-490.

3. See Clifton J. Phillips, "The Student Volunteer Movement and Its Role in China Missions, 1886-1920," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, 1974), 91-109.

4. See C. Stanley Smith, *The Development of Protestant Theological Education in China* (Shanghai, 1941), 54-55.

5. For a comprehensive listing of the 64 theological schools according to regions, see "Special Committee on Theological Education: Statistical Report of Theological Schools" compiled by Frank Price in *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the China Continuation Committee, Hangchow, April 27-May 2, 1917* (Shanghai, 1917), 45-49. The most comprehensive study on theological training in China was done by a special commission under the National Committee for Christian Religious Education in China published under the title, *Training for Service in the Chinese Church: A Report* (Shanghai, 1935). See Appendix B: "Statistical Chart of Theological and Bible Schools, 1933-1934." There 57 schools were listed under four categories: those requiring high school preparation (13); those requiring junior high preparation(14); those requiring less than junior high (26); and unregistered primary and middle schools (4).

6. See C. S. Smith, *op. cit.*, 88-127, on cooperation and union in theological schools. The architecture of the LMS Theological Institute in Tientsin, for example, was modeled after that of St. John's College, Cambridge University. The Lutheran Seminary in Shekow, Hupeh, was a reproduction of the main building of the Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul.

7. Student enrollment for 1917 was: 128 college graduates, 402 high school and junior high graduates, and 1,331 primary graduates; for 1922: 99 college, 295 middle school; and for 1938: 36 college, 209 middle school; and in 1950: 56 college, 493 high school graduates, 97 junior high graduates—out of a total of 694. See Cheng Chih-yi, "The Past, Present and Future of Theological Education in the Chinese Christian Church," *Shen-hsüeh-chih* (Nanking Seminary Review), XXVI:1-2 (November 1950), 12 (Chinese journal).

8. See John L. Nevius, "Methods of Mission Work: Organization of Stations, Present and Prospective," *Chinese Recorder,* XVII:5 (1886), 165-178; Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958). The lecture was first delivered in Korea in 1890 and published in 1895. It exerted a significant influence upon pioneer missionaries in Korea.

9. Witness Lee of the Little Flock (also called Assembly Hall) has produced a training manual called *An Outline of the Training Course for Service* (Taipei, mimeographed and bi-lingual, n.d.), 95 pages. For a short description of the Little Flock, see Allen J. Swanson, *Taiwan: Mainline versus Independent Church Growth: A Study in Contrast* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1970), 188-218.

10. Wang Chih-hsin, for example, argued for the indigenization of theological schools as the first step toward the training of indigenous church leaders for China. See Ying Yuan-tao, "The Background and Contents of Chinese Christian Thought, 1922-1927," in *Wen-she* Monthly (in Chinese), I:9-10 (September 1925), 18; see also Wang Chin-shin, "Indigenous Church and Indigenous Writings," *Wen-she,* I:6 (May 1926), 1-17.

11. For an analysis of the situation, see my article, "Foreign Missions and Theological Education: Taiwan, a Case Study," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (Fall, 1972), 1-16.

12. See Shoki Coe, "In Search of Renewal in Theological Education," *Theological Education,* IX:4 (Summer 1973), 233-243, and James Berquist, "TEF and the Uncertain Future of Third World Theological Education," idem, 244-253.

13. Coe, idem, 234.

14. Berquist, idem, 245.

15. Coe, idem, 237.

16. This breakthrough was probably due to James A. Berquist's influence since he joined the staff of TEF in the early 1970's. Berquist and P. Kamber Manickam's study, *The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1974), represents serious questioning of the professional ministry.

17. Coe, idem, 242-243.

18. Emerito P. Nacpil, "The Question of Excellence in Theological Education," *Southeast Asia Journal of Theology,* XVI:1 (1975), 55-59.

19. Idem, 57.

20. David S. C. Chen, "The Task of Theological Education in Northeast Asia Today; Viewed from a Theological Angle," *Northeast Asia Journal of Theology* (September 1971), 20.

21. T. F. Cole, P. G. Craighill, C. F. Hsiao, M. D. Wogstad, "Personality and Spiritual Development in Relation to Theological Education," *Theology and the Church,* XI:2 (April 1974), 1-13. This is a bi-lingual journal of the Tainan Theological College.

22. Chung Choon Kim, "Seeking Relevance in Methods of Theological Education," *NEAJT* (September, 1971), 39.

23. Development of ATA may be followed by subscription to *Asia Theological News,* published quarterly by the Association. Starting in 1977, ATA is also going to publish a semi-annual journal called *Asia Theological Bulletin.* (Contact Bong Rin Ro, Th.D., Executive Secretary, ATA, P.O. Box 28-4, Shihlin, Taipei 111, Taiwan, ROC.)

24. Noboru Yamaguchi and John Chongnahm Cho, "The Integration of the Academic, the Spiritual, and the Practical in Theological Training," in *Voice of the Church in Asia: Report of Proceedings, Asia Theological Association Consultation, Hong Kong, December 27, 1973-January 4, 1974* (Singapore, ATA, 1975), 81-90.

25. On a general summary of the development of the Chinese church in diaspora, see my article, "The Christian Mission to the Chinese People," *Lutheran World,* XXIII:4 (1976) 262-268.

26. See "Formation of the Association for Promotion of Chinese Theological Education," *Reformed Ecumenical Synod News Exchange,* IX:2 (Feb. 22, 1972), 769-772. The complete book-length proceedings of the 1972 and 1973 Consultation on Chinese Theological Education (Hong Kong and Baguio respectively) in Chinese may be ordered from APCTE office, 5 Devon Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

27. This question is also being asked in the West. See Daniel C. Batson and D. Campbell Wyckoff, "An Alternative Model for Ministerial Education," *Theological Education,* IX:2 (Winter 1973), 100-111. However, Batson still assumes the validity of the professional ministry and advocates two levels of training: sensitization to problems and providing tools for problem solving.

28. "Pastoral Roles and Mission Goals," *Currents in Theology and Mission,* III:5 (October 1976), 292-302.

29. A. T. Hanson, "Shepherd, Teacher and Celebrant in the New Testament Conception of the Ministry," in David Paton (ed.), *New Forms of Ministry* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1965), 21.

ISSUES, PRIORITIES, PROGRAMS, AND POLICIES

Members of the Council of International Ministries gave brief reports on their policies, priorities, and programs for leadershp education. Reports were divided into two categories—programs and issues on the one hand, and policy on the other.

I. Programs and Issues

A. Theological Education by Extension has been rather widely used with positive results in some places, mixed results in others, and marginal effectiveness in certain cases.

B. Training programs often frustrate the student by removing him from his environment and preparing him for a role his church cannot support.

C. Generally, it is felt training should take place as near to the church and community as possible, but occasionally a student may be sent abroad for further preparation.

D. Great flexibility is demanded of the agency in working with diverse situations around the world. No single method or approach is adequate anywhere, much less when applied globally.

E. Many member agencies are engaged in cooperative educational ventures. These have some strengths, but also certain weaknesses.

F. Although agencies generally have become wary of institutional approaches to education, considerable use is still made of Bible institutes, schools, colleges, and seminaries.

G. A new emphasis on informal education is emerging, although the possibilities and limitations of this method are still not known.

H. Most agencies do not have formal policy statements, but leadership education is receiving priority attention.[1]

II. Policies

A. Leadership preparation must begin as soon as a congregation is founded.

B. Leadership training should be consistent with a group's vision of the church.

C. The congregation is the basic unit in all Christian education and leadership preparation ought to emerge out of the congregational context.

D. Leadership education must be culturally relevant.

E. Training, to be effective, must be flexible and attuned to the Holy Spirit's movement.
F. Teachers should share the church's and students' piety.
G. The Paul-Timothy discipling method should be emphasized.
H. Training should be addressed to the whole person.
I. Training should equip believers to live more lovingly with neighbors of other faiths and of no faith.
J. Jesus Christ is the basis for training and model for leadership.
K. Training must respect and seek to develop the students' spiritual gifts.

In critical reflections on these brief surveys of programs and policies, Hugo Zorrilla and Jonathan Chao made a number of observations.

1. The agencies are still trying to do theological training **for others** rather than with them.
2. Many are involved in the TEE program. What is the content of the courses taught? What materials are being used? TEE has had strong influence but it needs to be evaluated. It has been successful because it is taking programs to the people. The model is all right, but the content is questionable.
3. The boards are engaged in an impressive range of programs following a variety of models. There is evident sensitivity to what is being requested by the churches.
4. Bible schools have been successful when operated by a mission, less so when administered by local leaders. This is a questionable model, but the need to which they are trying to respond is real.
5. Mennonites have been surprisingly open to demands of specific field situations. There is a commendable emphasis on training within community. They have de-emphasized brick and mortar. Nevertheless, they have been profoundly influenced by existing institutions and educational patterns.
6. The use of Western personnel evidences good cooperation with local people. This is an important means of sharing gifts internationally. But we must question the relevance of North American specialists, e.g., marriage counseling to Third World cultures.
7. The financial situation of students and their churches has deeply influenced the form of training.
8. Principles and policies for leadership development have been well stated, but reports on programs indicate that these ideals and principles have not been effectively implemented. Why?

Footnote

1. The only agency which presented a written policy on leadership training is Mennonite Board of Missions. A copy is available on request by writing directly to Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46514.